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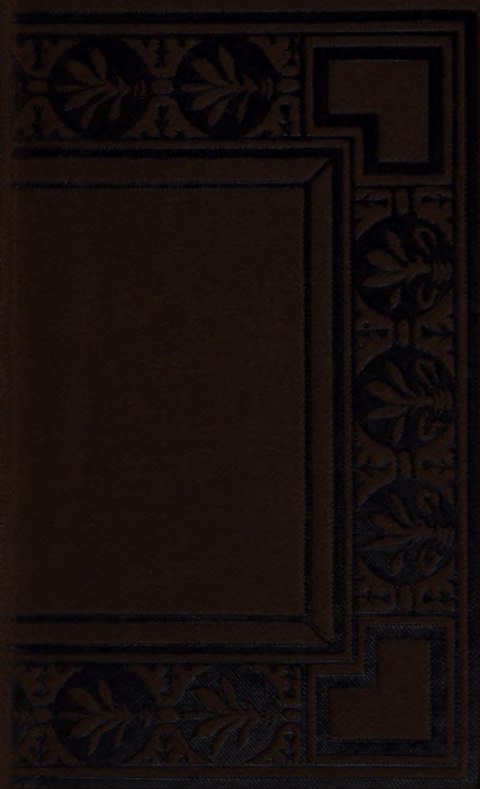
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# LONDON TOWN.







# LONDON TOWN:

## SKETCHES OF LONDON LIFE AND CHARACTER.

BY  
MARCUS FALL.

**In Two Volumes.**

VOL. II.



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# LONDON TOWN.

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## THE MAN OF MANY ENGAGEMENTS.

THE Man of Many Engagements is young and well favoured. He combines the appearance of prosperity with the manner of carelessness. He is always moderately well dressed, and never without a sovereign in his pocket.

He is a bachelor and a Bohemian. He has no strong personal dislikes, and takes an optimist view of all things. Politics he does not speak about, and he tries as much as possible to avoid controversial subjects of any kind. He is peaceful and good-natured, and desires to slip through the world, causing as little unpleasant remark as possible.

He is very sympathetic and intensely humane. He has got all the regulation

kindly sentiment of middle-class paterfamilias intensified tenfold and ever ready to run over. He is always terribly cut up about something or other that happened to someone or other, or awfully indignant about something that someone has done to a friend of his.

Many men cannot feel actively for the sufferings of people who live a thousand miles away; the Man of Many Engagements does not feel much sympathy for anyone outside the circle of his personal acquaintance. Public men and public events do not interest him because they are outside the sphere of his influence, and his attention to the people or facts decreases according to the square of the distance of these people or facts from his person or regard.

He is short of forty, and fuller of activity than the average man of twenty-five. He is an early riser and an indefatigable walker. He covers as much ground on foot in a day as an average postman, and employs as many cabs in the year as Mr. Sala, who puts down his at one thousand.

The Man of Many Engagements is of no

profession or occupation. He has a small independent income, which, as he purposes never to marry, he makes no attempt to increase. What the nature of the source whence this income flows no one can tell. Some think his father, who was in business, left him ten or fifteen thousand pounds. Others believe he has no more than three hundred a year derived from a row of houses somewhere in the East-End.

He never asks anyone to his place ; in fact, he is so much at the service of others and runs about so much that it seems almost unnecessary for him to have any place of his own.

Being a Bohemian, he is not particular about his address, and lives in a convenient and dirty street in the West Central district. If you call you never find him at home, nor is there any clear knowledge at his chambers of where you are likely to find him. The servant has a vague notion that he has gone West, or into the City, or somewhere near Regent's Park, or across the water, but nothing more definite.

You meet him at one o'clock in Piccadilly,

and are chatting to him. You ask him if he has lunched yet. No, he has not. "Then, come, lunch with me," you say.

"Very sorry, my dear fellow, but I really can't. I am now running across the water to see a fellow who lives close to Newman Hall's church, and with whom I have promised to lunch to-day. He's a fellow I knew at school. He has had a long spell of ill-luck, and has been down a good while, but now he has got a turn of luck at last. Some rich relative died, and left him a good thing; and he's asked a few fellows who didn't cut him because he happened to be poor to luncheon to-day, and I'm going."

Next day you meet him at five o'clock in Oxford Street, and ask him to go home and dine with you.

He answers: "My dear fellow, I should be delighted, but you see an old pal of mine has promised to dine with me at the Holborn this evening. I wish you would join us. Do come with me. He's a most charming fellow. I picked him up one night three or four years ago at Evans's. Ever since we have been close pals. I never picked up a man casually

that I hit it off so well with. He has a nice place in North Wales. I was down with him for a fortnight last year. You would like him very much. Do come and dine with us, and we shall have a quiet cigar afterwards."

You meet him at seven o'clock on Saturday evening, and you tell him you have a box at the Thespis, and you ask him to go there with you.

"I am really very sorry," he says, "but you know my friend Euripides is bringing out a farce at the Pantheon Theatre, and I've promised to go; and of course I must go. Poor Euripides has had a long time in the cold, and this is his first chance, and all friends ought to gather round him and give him a hand. About fifty of us are going, so the applause will be all right, and I daresay the laughter will come in at the right time; but the laughter is always doubtful. If you care to come I can pass you."

You meet him on the Embankment at two o'clock in the afternoon, and tell him you are going as far as the Bank, and ask him to walk as far as that with you.

"I'd be delighted," he answers, "but the

fact of the matter is I'm on my way to the Capella Hospital. A fellow I know very well was coming through Fetter Lane the other evening, and a van knocked him down and broke his leg, and I'm going to the Capella to see him. He hasn't a soul belonging to him in London, and is comparatively a stranger here, so that I think there is no one likely to call on him unless I go. Poor fellow, it's a very bad case. I wrote to him to say I should call to-day. Some of the doctors think the leg ought to come off, and others say wait awhile. But you know that once anyone says 'off' at the Capella the limb is bound to go. They can't afford to let a single limb slip through their fingers there. They must keep up the reputation for sawbones, or the profession would fight shy of them. I mean, of course, the students."

You ask him to dine with you that day week, but you find he has some prior engagement. You ask him to sup with you at Prosser's the day after to-morrow, that very evening he has an engagement to be present at a dance in Knightsbridge. You invite him to come and see you any time during the month

of September at Bournemouth, you find that all his September is filled up, so that there is no more chance of his being able to get a day out of London during that month than a prisoner in Newgate.

By no means can you get him to give you more of his time than twenty minutes. No arguments you urge, no allurements you can hold out will induce him to make any appointment with you. He has such an abject horror of binding his future action down that he will invent engagements all day long rather than allow you to pin him to any appointment with you.

He is usually careful not to mention the name of the man with whom he has the appointment forbidding one with you. If he does mention a name he makes sure that you do not know the person. Thus he escapes detection. Indeed, so popular is he, and so harmless and good-natured are his lies, that no one wants to find him out. What he says does no one harm, and is intended only to shield the speaker from making an appointment with you and breaking it. For the most striking peculiarity of the Man of Many En-

gagements is, that he is utterly incapable of keeping one.

When you met him going, as he said, to the hospital, if you had dogged him you would have found that as soon as he was fairly out of your sight he took the first turning leading in a direction opposite the way to the hospital. The mere excuse he had given you for not going to the Bank so weighed upon him and chafed him that he felt constrained beyond the power of resistance to shake off the very appearance of any objection to go to the hospital.

The evening he told you he was going to the Pantheon his horror of theatres became so strong that he would not go under a roof of any kind, but walked about until late, and did not go home until he had seen the fruit and flowers at Covent Garden.

You will find it almost impossible to detect him, for he has always a way out of any difficulty he may be betrayed into.

Had you followed him that day he said he was going to the hospital, encountered him when he had turned his back upon the Capella, and reminded him of his words, he would have

told you that he turned aside merely to buy a little treat for the injured man—a book, or a bundle of newspapers, or something of that kind.

Had you offered to give up the Thespis and go with him to the Pantheon, he would have consulted a note-book, and found out that what his friend Euripides really wished him to do was to stay away that night and not come to the Pantheon until the farce was working freely.

He never asks you to go with him until he fancies you can't.

The Man of Many Engagements was once the very opposite of what he is now. He was truthful to a fault, made engagements and kept them punctually. He drew on his imagination for no claims upon his time. But in an evil hour he complicated his engagements so hopelessly that he broke down completely and gave up all hope, and, as it were, sate down amid the ruins of his punctuality, and swore never again to commit himself to keep an appointment.

At first this was the source of endless trouble to him, for people took it ill of him to

refuse so frequently without any better excuse than a vague "prior engagement."

Then it was that the Man of Many Engagements hit upon the brilliant idea of inventing specific engagements which could not easily be verified. This creative power reached a higher development when it became necessary for him to invent not only the appointments, but the people and the places of these appointments as well.

The Man of Many Engagements is the victim of nervous horror of personal restraint, and he only uses his invention to save your feeling rebuffed at a refusal.

## THE VISITING GOVERNESS.

SHE is the daughter of an old Navy lieutenant, and twenty-nine years of age. Her father is dead ; her mother still lives and enjoys, as the phrase goes, a small pension. Her mother is sixty-five, a little short-tempered, a little fretful, and always mindful of the days when she depended on no one but her husband, whose only delight was to minister to her comfort. As a matter of fact, the deceased was by no means an exemplary character, and not half as good to her as he should be. He drank freely when on shore, and, if rumour was to be believed, had grown tired of his wife and fond of someone else long before his death. All this was, of course, hidden from "the child," and "the child" now, although an old young woman, is supposed by her mother to

have preserved the credulity of twenty years back.

She is low of stature and plain of feature. Her amiability and her desire to earn a living respectably and add a few simple comforts to the declining days of her mother count for little with the world. She will never marry, because she has no time for love, apart from duty, and because she has no fortune and no good looks. At school she was clever, and could learn anything put before her. At school Polly Lovelace sat beside her. Polly could learn nothing at all, not even maidenly reserve. But Polly had a wonderfully pretty face, pink and white and round, and a head soft with golden brown hair clustering over her foolish little white forehead. Polly was a well-to-do tradesman's daughter. The tradesman met with misfortune in business, and seven years ago she went on the stage as ballet-girl. She is on the stage yet, and although she draws only thirty shillings a week from the theatre, the little Visiting Governess sees her now and then driving down Regent Street in her brougham. When Polly cut the little Governess first, the latter felt hurt, for then she did not know all.

Now the plain-faced little teacher looks down and blushes when the glittering brougham hurries by.

Although the Visiting Governess sets a light price on her services, she finds it hard to get full occupation. Every morning she reads the advertising columns of a paper and answers any advertisement indicating a want such as she can supply. She and her mother lodge over a grocer's shop in High Street, Kensington. She has one pupil worth five shillings a week at Hammersmith, and another worth four shillings a week at Islington. She teaches music to the daughter of a butcher in the Borough, and instructs a family of three young children in the elements of English at Bloomsbury. Her gross earnings are thirty shillings a week, out of which ten go for railway and omnibus fares. She goes every day to some houses and three days in the week to others. Saturday is a half-holiday with all her pupils, and no work is done by them after three o'clock. Saturday afternoon she spends sewing, mending her clothes, making something to lessen the dowdy look her clothes get from too much wear and infrequent renewal.

She leaves home at eight o'clock in the morning with her roll of music, her umbrella, and her little bag. In the bag is the food for the day, a little bread and butter, a scrap of cold meat, and half a pint of table-beer in a little bottle. She is home to tea at nine and falls asleep at their small fire before ten. At ten she goes to bed. At six she is up again.

At the houses she visits she is regarded in the light of a necessary evil. She cannot be done without, she costs money, and is a source of comfort or happiness to no one. The men whose children she teaches being chiefly engaged in business, and having strictly business views of all things, imagine she is more or less an impostor since they cannot see or feel the article they get for their money. Even a tax-man's claim seems reasonable compared with hers. They hold that teaching children is but an idle and vagabond way of getting a living.

Mothers will not have their darlings pressed too much, and then are disappointed and look cross when they learn that their neighbours' children are more advanced. Mothers, too, who are ignorant, and have not always been as

well off as now, are disposed to interfere and dictate courses utterly impracticable, and if these courses are not followed, any defect subsequently discovered in the attainments of the brood is attributed to the stiff-necked arrogance of the teacher.

The pathway of the Visiting Governess is not strewn with roses. It is full of trials, of weariness, of humiliation, and tears. It has no future to look forward to. It is a daily way of petty tribulations and sacrifices. It leads to that corner of God's Acre where are buried the bodies of those martyrs who died of long days full of little pains, and whose crowns are never visible to eyes of men.

## A LITERARY EVENING.

MR. BENJAMIN JONSON is editor of the popular shilling magazine, "Trafalgar Square," and Mrs. Benjamin Jonson is his wife and devoted admirer. He is the erratic genius, and she the guardian angel of decorum. He has no great respect for anything but intellect; she has the greatest admiration for propriety. He would like to wear long hair and receive his friends in his dressing-gown. She insists on monthly visits to the barber, and a black coat at dinner. He considers a drawing-room as good a place as any other to smoke in. She will not hear of tobacco anywhere but in the dining-room or his study. He is an arrant Bohemian at heart, but "dissembles" like the villain in a burlesque. He gets as much fun

out of deferring to his wife as another man out of assuming the autocrat. Benjamin Jonson, editor of "Trafalgar Square," and author of half-a-dozen successful novels, owns a clear head, a kind heart, and a good wife: and though by no means uxorious, thinks much more of the last than of the first. So he conforms to her behests as to the drawing-room, and behaves himself well on their Sunday evenings, like a boy striving to win a prize.

The Jonsons have a tidy little hundred-pound house within a thousand paces of Primrose Hill. The drawing-room, situated on the first-floor, is a pleasant apartment of genteel dimensions. The room is intended for frequent use, and there are fewer spider-legged chairs than one usually finds in the corresponding rooms of houses of similar pretensions. The hangings, carpet, and curtains are green. There are three couches, a grand piano, a couple of easy-chairs, and a sprinkling of hassocks and ordinary chairs. The room on this particular Sunday evening is lighted by three lamps with green reading-shades, so that the upper part of the room lies in gloom.

It is after dinner, about half-past nine. There are only two persons in the room, and they are sitting on the hearthrug in front of the fire. The maid is Mabel, Jonson's only daughter, aged eighteen. The youth is Willie Dossette, a rising figure draughtsman. Every one knows that Willie is awful spoons on Mabel, and that Mabel is—well, that she thinks Willie awfully nice. Father and mother will be up in a few minutes, so the two young people are making the most of this glorious opportunity—that is to say, she is looking into the fire, he is looking at her, and neither of them is doing or saying anything. Willie Dossette will recollect this lost opportunity when he is going home, and tell whoever may happen to be his companion on the way; for Willie has no secrets from his friends, although, somehow, for the life of him, “By Jove! you know,” he has got but one secret in all the world, and keeps that from only one person; the secret being that he is in love with Mabel, and the one person to whom he can't tell this being Mabel herself. For to-night his chance has passed away; here are father and mother.

Mr. Jonson moves at once towards the hearthrug and makes a ludicrous attempt to copy young Dossette's posture and sit *à la Turque*. By no possibility can he induce his ankles to keep under his knees. No sooner does he remove his hands from his feet than they begin to slide slowly along the carpet, until his knees rise up in judgment against him in front. "Clearly," he says, with a sigh of defeat as he gets up, "that is not my pose when I want to put the nose of the Apollo Belvedere out of joint for elegance and impressiveness."

"Miss Smithers," announces the servant, and a thin, undersized woman, wearing a bright green dress, a false front, and spectacles, enters. She throws her arms aloft and says, "Oh, Mrs. Jonson!" while she crosses the room as though the last person on earth she expected to see in that room was Mrs. Jonson. She runs over the floor, lets her arms fall on Mrs. Jonson's shoulders, and locks herself on that good lady's neck with a gurgle of joy, and a kind of a snap of ecstasy. "Mrs. Jonson," she repeats in an agony of rapture, as though that lady had been dead four or five years and

come back from the tomb especially to do Miss Smithers a spiritual service of the first importance. After a few moments of mute intoxication with bliss, the visitor sinks beside her hostess and whispers, exhausted by the violence of her emotions, "Dear Mrs. Jonson, how good of you to let me come!" Her eyes now fall upon the host approaching to greet her. Her manner changes instantly. She draws herself up to her full sitting height, freezes him with a north-east glance, and says, in the grand manner, replying to his greeting and welcome, "I am well, thank you, Mr. Jonson. How are you?" She asks the question in a tone which seems to imply that in so far as any Man is well, Woman is wronged. Miss Smithers is about forty-three years of age, a Woman's Rights woman who makes a living by writing stories for children. In these stories she shows a tender and pathetic appreciation of a mother's love, a quality which grows the more sadly tender and pathetic when one looks at her and feels her gentle heart is never to yearn over a little one of her own.

“Mr. Wilbert Frome.” A man of thirty-five, looking fifty. His head is quite bald. He is in full-dress, the clothes showing tokens of having made several appearances in public before, like their owner, one of the stock company of the Arundel Theatre. He is a very grave, sedate man, with, for a player, a singularly impassive face. He is only a third-rate actor, and he knows it. He assumes no airs, is courteous and well-mannered, and although willing to “talk shop,” prefers to speak of others rather than himself. Like all other actors, he has a fund of anecdotes, which require, at all events, a slight acquaintance with things theatrical to comprehend. He is not long in the room when he and Jonson, who has a great liking for him, are closeted in a corner, discussing the chances of success awaiting a play of the editor’s now being rehearsed at the Arundel.

“Mr. Freemantle.” In all likelihood this is the most important man who will be here to-night. A tall, handsome, singularly refined-looking man, with hair prematurely blanched, and an iron-grey beard hanging down low

over his waistcoat. There is regal intelligence in his eye and chivalry in his voice and carriage. He might sit to a painter for Richard Plantagenet, Æschylus, or Cortez. He is a man who has done famous things in many walks of literature. He is one of the reviewers on the great weekly paper, the *Astræa*. He makes it a point never to write about a book not worthy of praise when judged by high standards. Jonson once said jestingly to him: "Here is a man who has read all my books and can't praise one." To which he replied: "I should praise them for their badness if I thought them less good than they really are." Miss Jonson is now seated in an easy-chair, Mr. Freemantle goes to her and sits down beside her. Presently the two are absorbed in a most animated discussion as to whether, if Joan, Miss Jonson's collie-dog, lying on the hearth, were to eat up Mr. Freemantle for his wickedness in deliberately pulling open one of the bows on the sleeve of the dog's owner, the said dog would or would not be justified and entitled to the gratitude of mankind,

and whether or not Her Majesty's Opposition would be justified in bringing forward a motion in connection with the matter.

“Mr. Crawford Croley.” He is the chief poet of the “Trafalgar Square.” His very appearance is an outrage upon the conventional notion of one of his craft. He is low-sized, and most materially stout. His face is bluff and ruddy as a mountaineer's. His hair is cut so close that it could be used in evidence against him if he were accused of breaking jail. His manners are far removed from the diffident or contemplative. He is glib, jocular, almost boisterous. In dress he is a model of neatness, and his white hands and well-kept nails secure him distinction even if genius denied it to him. And yet he is a follower of the mystics, and writes poetry which makes his admirers open their mouths in stupefaction and amazement, and his enemies grind their teeth with rage; for the former can't see far enough into his verse to expound it, and the latter can't understand enough of it to abuse it. As to himself, he doesn't care. Let friends and foes fight out

their battles ; he has plenty to do in fighting in the rhymes.

By this time it is half-past ten, and while we have been talking about the most striking figures and characters present there have dropped in a few nonentities, weak-kneed amateurs and worn-out professionals, and those who can no longer be called amateurs, and cannot be considered worn-out professionals, because they never had anything to wear out. Some are turning over a pile of magazines under one of the lamps, others are talking "shop" earnestly in small groups about the room. Some are sitting on the floor, indulging in what they call a literary picnic. The picnic is nothing more than one of the company reading out a few lines of prose or verse, followed by a fire of comment all round, and then another reading out his pet passage from the same or another book, and so on.

Although there is plenty of "shop talk," no business is introduced. The editor does not say, "Write me such and such an article," nor does the contributor say, "Will you print

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my epic?" Such things are for the working-days and the business office. Talking of business, by-the-way, suggests that for the present, in the matter of this Literary Evening, our business is done—so good-night.

## THE FIERY PETARD.

THE Fiery Petard is a man in the prime of life, lithe, active, restless. He is always for urging things forward, for pushing matters through. He is the apostle of doing rather than of thinking, and the goad to action rather than the drag to thought. He explodes a hundred times a day at every gate and palisade that offends him, and with infinitely more swiftness than the fabulous worm of boy's faith comes together again, makes himself whole, and is ready to burst anew before you have time to follow the splinters of his former self, or examine the result of his last forcible disruption.

If a horse is down on the asphalte, there you see him inciting lethargic spectators to

help up the fallen beast. If horses find their burden too great for some steep hill, he is to be found clinging to the spoke of a wheel and inviting passengers to lend a hand. If he finds the wheels of two perambulators locked in the park he disengages them, rouses up the tender occupants of the vehicles, ascertains that "the bottles" have not been smashed in the fray, shakes hands with the two maids, and is in pursuit of a large boy who is passing his time in thrashing a small boy before the maids have fully appreciated the nature of the complication from which he has delivered them.

He is the knight-errant of the streets. He seizes an old woman at a crossing, holds up his stick, stops the traffic, and while he is getting her over in safety ascertains much of her family history, and many peculiarities of her dear dear husband.

He rushes into milk-shops in out-of-the-way places, purchases a pennyworth of dubious-looking fluid, tastes it, impugns it, orders a pint of it to be put in a bottle, and demands a directory or the name of the nearest public analyst.

If he finds four or five men idling at the corner of a public-house, he harangues them on the condition of the country, and assures them that the financial difficulties which have overtaken the nation are to be attributed to such as they. To this they demur, whereupon a few good round, rich oaths convince them that he is of the right sort, and not too fearfully clever or religious for such as they to talk to. So they pass from demurrer to protest. Whereupon he shows them that for every moment they stand idle they are heaping up the National Debt around themselves and their families in so frightful a manner that there is no earthly hope for them or their country unless they find some work within the next hour or hour and a half.

He may, however, be said to have been created for ruffians. All the instances in the above list may be regarded as the manner in which he displays his humane accomplishments. But ruffians are his business. Ruffians of the deepest dye are his dearest pets. He gloats and broods over a ruffian as a hungry lion who has cubs at home gloats over a foolish calf. The ruffian has no more chance

against him than the calf has against the lion. He is down on his prey like a falcon on a dove. The more black and heinous the character of his unfortunate victim, the more keen his delight.

Give him a ruffianly Minister of State, and he will kiss the ground under your feet. Give him a Colonial Secretary who blunders into alienating the affections of a colony, and he will ask no food for a week. High and low he will abuse that man, tear that man to pieces, stamp on his dead body, and, having crushed out the last faint spark of official life, he will mount on the corpse and deliver a funeral oration which would have made Mark Antony die of envy that he had not held the brief on the other side.

His hope of lighting upon a ruffian bishop was once high ; but alas ! as years go by some of his brightest dreams are fading into dull commonplaces, and among these was a beatific vision of a ruffian bishop. Some of the wisest and wittiest sayings he ever invented are unfortunately applicable only to a bishop who rifled the bodies of people buried in his own cathedral. Even still, the Fiery Petard

is in hope that some member of the bench of lawn will poison his young family and his wife, or be a co-respondent in a divorce-case.

In politics the Fiery Petard is even more violent than in social life. The Red Man and the Black Man must go, then why delay? Let them not stand upon the order of their going, but go—at once. Who wants all Africa crawling with lazy ruffian niggers? No one. Europe doesn't, America doesn't, Australia doesn't, and there, no one else has a right to want it. Who wants that ridiculous Red Man crawling over part of America? No one. England doesn't want him, America doesn't want him, and, after all, who on earth else but England and America has any right to want anything? Therefore, shear them down, Black and Red, and make way for the White. Two Blacks don't make a White. No, nor any number of Blacks and Reds. Cut them down, chop them up, spread them over the land to fructify it for the White Man. All ruffians ought to be cut up to make fat land for honest men to till.

But, thank Heaven, this is a prosperous country, and a moral country, and a country,

moreover, supplied with all the products of civilisation and luxury. We need not go to America or Africa for our ruffians. We have our own ruffians without waiting until they are found on the Bench of Bishops, or the Front Row at the Ministerial side in the Lower House. The Fiery Petard is impartial, and if he can't get exactly the class of ruffian he desires, he submits with a shrug of the shoulders, and goes hastily for the one at hand.

Going home at one o'clock in the morning he sees a policeman handling a woman roughly. He draws near, and says :

"Don't you think she'll do with what she's had of that, my fine fellow?"

"Mind your own business," retorts the policeman sulkily.

"That's what I'm doing, my fine fellow. Don't you think that woman has had enough of your rough handling?"

"Get away," says the policeman, giving the Fiery Petard a push on the shoulder.

Thereupon he goes home, and writes to Sir E. Henderson, laying the facts before him, and asking the knight if he thinks it is

safe to come home at one o'clock in the morning by the Strand, London, or, ought he to go from Temple Bar to Wellington Street by the Thames Embankment or High Holborn.

To this letter he gets no reply. He writes again to Sir E. Henderson, and awaits an answer for a few days.

While he is awaiting this answer, he is one evening at a theatrical club, from which, sallying forth at an advanced hour of the morning, he, and those who are with him, are about to turn into the great Strand thoroughfare, when he suddenly stops, relates to the group the circumstance of the former morning, the course he has taken, and assures them that he thinks it dangerous to go along the Strand at such a time.

They agree with him, and seek their homes by another rout.

Again he writes to Colonel Henderson, and presses for an answer to his question, as to whether it is safe for peaceful people to go down the Strand, London, at one o'clock in the morning?

Then comes from the police-station, Elbow-lane, the Chief Inspector, asking for an interview with the Fiery Petard.

The officer has a round, smooth, kindly face, and a most straightforward and conciliatory manner; he explains that he has come concerning the matter of the letter.

"My dear sir," says the Petard, impetuously, "I assure you I have no desire to give you the least trouble in this matter. I only want to get a letter from Sir Henderson" (a terribly elliptical way of referring to the mighty Chief), "saying whether he thinks it is safe or not for one to go home by the Strand, London, at one o'clock in the morning."

"Well, sir, I think it is."

"I am afraid to go. I always go home by the Embankment now. You are very kind to come. I don't want to injure the man who pushed me; he did not hurt me in the least, but 'twas an assault, and I want to know from Sir Henderson himself" (again this appalling elision of christian-name) "whether *he* thinks it safe for one to go home by the Strand, London, at one o'clock in the morning?"

"Quite safe, sir ; have you got the man's number ?"

"The man's number !" in a tone of exasperate astonishment. "No. But I gave full descriptions of the time, place, and man. Good heavens ! sir, if it had been a civilian you would not have come to me for his number, and you would have had him up long ago."

"I assure you, sir, we are doing the very best we can, but there will be some little delay before we can be quite sure of the man."

"It is exceedingly kind of you to call, and nothing could have been more patient, courteous, and conciliatory than your manner. I assured you before, I assure you again, it would grieve me to cause you the least inconvenience or trouble, and I haven't the least desire in the world that the man should be punished for what he did to me. I told you before he did not hurt me. He merely put his hand on my shoulder and pushed me aside."

"We are doing our best to find the man. He had no shadow of right to assault you in the way you say. And, sir, believe me, we shall get him in a little time."

“My dear sir, I assure you you overwhelm me with the thought of all the trouble you have taken about this affair. I do not desire that you should punish or find this man. I only want to know, under Sir Henderson’s hand, whether he thinks it safe for one to go home by the Strand, London, at one o’clock in the morning.”

With a smile and a bow, and a slight shake of the head, as though the Fiery Petard was a hard case, the chief officer retires.

As a matter of fact, a letter does come from Sir Henderson, lamenting the occurrence complained of, and assuring the writer of the letters that for the future the Strand, London, is safe at one o’clock in the morning.

## SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE.

THE newspapers contained the announcement that "The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon's congregation will vacate their seats in the Tabernacle in favour of the general public to-morrow, Sunday evening. Service will begin at 6.30."

At 6.15 we find ourselves in Newington, opposite that stolid matter-of-fact-looking place of worship. Nothing can be more practical-looking. Not an inch of space is devoted to ornament, not a ton of stone is sacrificed to effect. There is a Greek portico, no doubt. But the portico of the Greeks was useful to keep the sun from the philosophers who taught, and the portico of the Tabernacle is useful to keep the rain from those who come to learn.

People are crowding in at the rate of two

hundred a minute, as fast as the businesslike-looking doorways can swallow them up. Tram-cars and omnibuses come to the gates, set down their serious-looking folk, and pass away empty. Now and then a hansom cab drops a commonplace bride and bridegroom, or a commonplace elderly couple, and departs. But the vast majority of those who come arrive on foot, and toil up the steps with laggard feet as though they had walked from a great distance. We do not observe any of the very poor. The waifs and strays of many shires and boroughs remote from London, and the casual visitors from the two cities, twelve towns, and one hundred and forty-seven villages that go to make up the metropolis, appear all to be in the social zone between the mechanic and the successful but not fashionable tradesman. We find no one as low as a working-man; no one who follows any liberal or learned profession. There is a steady persistency in the way these people come up these steps as though they were quite sure of finding within exactly what they seek. There is no hesitancy or loitering. Each one has come to hear Spurgeon preach, and each one is resolved

to get as good a seat as possible. The congregation does not look either super-spiritualised or super-depraved. It is Sunday, and its worldly work for the week is over, and this day has been laid aside for rest and the business of the other world, and this congregation has come to look after its work for the other world or to rest.

At twenty minutes past six we enter. All places on the floor have been occupied some time; all seats in the front tier are full, so we climb the steep high stone steps through the square desolate stair-well. Everything here, as outside, is practicable, except the steps, which are so high as to be almost impracticable. In a moment we are in the spacious body of the church. This is one of the most novel sights in London. The lozenge-shaped space is paved with human heads, and packed from "garret to basement" with human forms. "Over the clock" is a little room to spare, but in less than five minutes the seats there are appropriated, and for five minutes before the hour at which the service is announced to begin there is not a vacant seat in the church.

Inside, too, all is practical and business-like in the arrangements. The light is capital, the colour is cheerful, the seats are comfortable and commodious. There is no attempt to produce a dim religious light, no subduing or dulling of spent tertiary colours, no chance of a visitor posing as a martyr because of occupying one of the seats. The acoustic properties of the building are found to be most admirable. The place was designed and built that the congregation might sit in comfort and hear and see without strain to the senses.

Fortune favours us, and we get a place in the front row about halfway down the left-hand side of the platform. Upon the seat to be occupied by each person is a half-sheet of paper printed on one side and bearing the heading: "Hymns to be sung at the Metropolitan Tabernacle on Lord's-day evening, August 11th, 18—." Under the heading comes the following paragraph preceding the hymns: "It is earnestly requested that every sincere worshipper will endeavour to join in the song, carefully attending to time and tune; and, above all, being concerned to

worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. The hymns are selected from 'Our Own Hymn Book,' compiled by Mr. Spurgeon. It is a special request that no one will attempt to leave the Tabernacle till the service is quite concluded, as it creates much disturbance, and renders it difficult to hear the preacher." For the present, each person has his or her half-sheet of paper folded up, or is studying it, or using it as a fan.

On a level with the first tier of seats is Mr. Spurgeon's platform. It protrudes into the well of the amphitheatre, so that it is visible from all parts of the church. Upon it are a table, chair, and sofa. On the table rests a Bible. From the platform to the floor runs down each side a semi-spiral flight of steps leading into the choir, situated immediately under and in front of the platform. The carpet of the platform and the covers of the sofa are of the same hue, deep red, approaching plum colour.

Precisely at thirty minutes past six several men come down the passage directly behind the platform, and take up prominent positions in the neighbourhood of the platform. Last

of these is a stout, square-built, square-jawed man of between forty and fifty. Although most of those present here this evening are strangers, there is no commotion upon the entry of the famous preacher. There are two reasons for this apparent insensibility, one physical, one mental. The physical reason is, that the building is so admirably constructed, so successfully focused upon the small patch of platform that every man, woman, and child in the house can see the preacher from the moment he reaches the parapet of his balcony. The mental reason is, that at the root of the attendance of this vast concourse here this evening lies the business idea. There is no personal enthusiasm towards the preacher. The people have come on business, and are too good business people to jeopardise their calm by a disturbing interest in anything whatsoever but the subject-matter of the evening's service. It is rarely that a preacher of such wide and lasting popularity exercises so little personal magic over a congregation.

The service opens with a prayer. Glancing down from the height at which we sit, the

bright-coloured hats and bonnets of the women make the floor of the house look like a parterre of flowers, and higher up, the first tier, sloping from the back to the front, presents the appearance of flowers arranged upon a vast stand. At the beginning of the prayer the whole multitude bend forward with one impulse, the bright hats and bonnets, the bald and grey heads, are lost to view, and in their stead appears a dark grey surface made up of the broad-cloth-clad backs of the men and dark shoulder articles of the women.

When the prayer is concluded there is a faint rustling sound, and looking down again we see the heads once more uplifted, and close to each head a half sheet of paper held at a convenient distance for reading. We glance carefully round; no one is without a paper, and everyone seems studying his own. There are four hymns in all, and one is about to be sung. Mr. Spurgeon gives it out slowly and with enormous distinctness. The effect of his voice in giving out the hymn is peculiar. The words come separately and individually and take their places, as it were, with in-

tervals between them like men who are to assist at a pageant, arriving one by one and marching to their posts. The first stanza having been read over, and the first line repeated, all rise to their feet by one act of accord. The choir start the hymn, and between five and six thousand voices take it up with precision as to time and accuracy as to tune. The vast volume of sound does not deafen or disquiet. It is mild and suppressed. You know it has the strength of a giant, but you feel it is not using it tyrannously. At our back is a poor, slender-looking man with a red-brown beard. He is like a shoemaker out of work. His voice comes in with clear sharp edge, a counter-tenor. By our side is a woman, a maid-of-all-work. She strikes in only now and then with a few low contralto notes she is sure of; she never risks a catastrophe up high. She has only about three-and-a-half notes, but she never loses a chance of contributing them when occasion offers. On our other side is a fresh-coloured schoolgirl home for the holidays. Her voice is a thin soprano, and seems to roughen the edges of the

counter-tenor's. But when this happens there floats in upon our exercised ears the dull low boom of a rolling bass. Who the owner of the bass is we cannot find out. We look around vainly endeavouring to discover. Now we fix on one, now on another, but this *ignis fatuus* of a voice eludes our efforts to run it to—flesh. Meanwhile, abroad in the hollow roof of the building the confluent concord of five thousand voices swell the hymn to an imperial pæan.

Mr. Spurgeon is in a mild phase. Neither his gestures, his attitudes, nor his illustrations are very exceptional. He makes no wild dashes across his platform, does not glide down the hand-rail to the chair to illustrate the descent into hell, does not plunge neck deep into water, did not illustrate his discourse with an assortment of lamps. He does not make any of the congregation laugh, or weep, or groan. Possessed of a powerful, though by no means delicate voice, he is able to fill the vast hall with ease. You can lean back and listen to him in perfect rest. But his elocution, particularly in reading, is fearfully monotonous and dreary. It is always

loud and distinct, never subtle. Energy and violence, and homely similes and a powerful voice, are the elements upon which his popularity rests. As an illustration of his taste, we quote as nearly as we can remember, some of his concluding words on Sunday evening : “Our preaching is so much like a fiddler’s play, people come to see how we do it. Now I don’t care what you think of me so long as you can see something in what I say.”

## THE POLICEMAN.

THE policeman is between thirty and forty years of age. He is broad, thick-set, not strikingly tall. He wears a full beard and moustache, and his complexion is ruddy and healthful. His hands are large and soft, and his figure has not attractions for a sculptor. He is too vast in the region of the waist for grace and too full in the back for beauty. His walk is ponderous and deliberate, as though mighty things depended upon his doing nothing. There is nothing adventurous or daring about him. You could not fancy him leading a forlorn hope or going farther from his base of operation than four streets off. Gentlefolk do nothing as an art, and do it gracefully, prettily; the Policeman does nothing as a trade, and does it clumsily.

There is a look about him as though he had been disinherited of his conscience, or had sworn it all away and felt aggrieved by not having got a better price for it. He knows and feels that he is the buffer between Society's carriage and the prison-van. He feels that only for crime he would have either to adopt some useful trade or take to the jemmy himself, and he cannot help regarding the burglar who keeps him in luxurious *far niente* or out of jail as an important if unintentional benefactor.

His mind is slower than even his body. When you address him in the most cursory way and trivial interest, he always regards you fixedly for awhile, as though he were carefully deciding to what class of murderers or garotters or bigamists you belonged. If you ask him the way to St. Paul's, he takes time to decide on which sacrilegious robberies you are bent—the carrying away of Wellington's tomb or stripping the gold off the gilded gallery. If you inquire the direction of the Thames Embankment, he inwardly examines himself as to whether you are the suicide whose body is so frequently fished out of the river. If you

ask him how you are to reach Charing Cross Railway Station, he examines you carefully to find out in which pocket you carry the countess's diamonds with which you are flying to France.

His perception is as slow as the executive faculties of his mind. His ignorance of offences against the law, his absolute inability to distinguish crimes from meritorious actions are features of his character interesting to all naturalists. If he sees a man pick a lady's pocket he walks leisurely after the thief, and when he comes up with him opens a conversation by throwing out skirmishing remarks about the weather or the war. Having "felt" the enemy, he withdraws the skirmishers and begins real business with his big guns at long ranges. Such as "Now, what business had you looking into that milliner's window where the lady was standing?" Then follows the platoon firing of the infantry, such as "You were only looking in, too, at the bonnets! Oh, is that all? And, no doubt, you were giving the lady a help towards one of the bonnets! Now don't deny your goodness. What did you put into the lady's pocket, for I saw your hand

go in?" After this comes the charge and capture.

When he comes upon two men fighting he surveys the scene with deliberation and astonishment. Evidently neither tradition nor experience has furnished him with a precedent for the case. At last a desire for information overcomes his astonishment, and he seizes one of the belligerents and demands, in a tone of earnest inquiry: "What are you doing—eh? What are you doing?"

If he finds a man helplessly drunk lying on the pavement, he shakes up the man and puts him leaning against the wall; and, having surveyed the victim of Bacchus with a stare of stolid incredulity, he asks: "What's the matter? What are you doing here? Why don't you go home to your wife and family?"

And here a melancholy suspicion breaks in upon us. We have been trying to select from our notes what other features of the London policeman's physique, character, or mind we should dwell upon, when suddenly we perceived in our mind a cold fear, a chilling disillusion. In farces, and sketches,

and stories of London innumerable, we have seen the rollicking life below stairs led by the policeman. We have seen the amorous cook cutting off for him the tid-bits of the master. We have seen him wallowing in the master's beer and apoplectic with the master's cream-cheese. We have seen him gorged with pies, have watched his exuberant health crushed out of him by cucumber and walnuts, purveyed by the tender-hearted mistress of the frying-pan. We have seen him draw upon the resources of his enormous appetite in a way and to an extent that filled us with alarm. We have seen him swallow two dinners from soup to fruit, and then two other dinners wrong side up, from fruit to soup, the feat suggesting considerations of horror and sympathy too dire for longer thought. But much of this is, we are made melancholy to think, changed or passed away. The Policeman of the Area Belle and the Kitchen's Queen is vanishing into those dim tracks of antiquity where the mastodon prowled by the watch-fires of the gorillas and oysters thrive on Primrose Hill.

## THE SUPERLATIVE WEATHERCOCK.

THE Superlative Weathercock is a man on the borderland of forty. He is thin, wiry, tall, and stoops slightly in his walk. He wears whiskers and moustaches. He shaves his chin. His eyes are light blue, his nose long and thin, his forehead marked with wrinkles parallel to the horizon. His temples are hollow and white. His hair is thin and lank, his clothes, though good and well made, never fit him properly. It looks as if his very bone and limbs had the power of frequent change of position and form.

He has good blood in his veins, but his people are poor. He had not sufficient head for any learned profession, nor sufficient means for the Army. He declined the Navy because

the smell of tar made him savage, and the smell of bilge-water made him sick.

For many years his career had been the source of anxious thought to his father and mother, he took little interest in the thing himself. A few hundreds a year came to him from a maternal aunt, and although he could not live on this income he had no idea of how to increase it. When twenty-eight he fell suddenly in love with a pretty neighbour, and married her secretly a month after making her acquaintance.

He was desperately in love at the time, and, moreover, believed the girl had money; so that he felt he had done an excellent stroke of business. Upon investigation it appeared she was, like himself, the owner of a few hundreds a year. This discovery was disconcerting, but now nothing could be done but live out life in a cottage instead of a palace as he had imagined. But he was too changeable to suffer long, so he became reconciled, on condition that he reserved the right of perpetual protest.

"You know," he would say, "I was most awfully in love at the time, most awfully

indeed; and my wife was awfully in love with me, she was indeed. We are awfully in love with one another still, you know. But, you see, I should have married money, that's it. I ought to have married a very rich woman, and then I should have been awfully jolly.

"You can't be half so jolly if you haven't money as if you have. Of course there is no one in the world happier than I, for my wife is the most beautiful woman in England, and loves me better than any other wife loves her husband; but, you see, I should be much more awfully jolly if I had married money.

"You think it was my own fault not to marry money, not at all. How could I help marrying my wife when once I fell in love with her and she with me? I was terribly in love at the time, and couldn't help marrying my wife to save my soul. But, you see, my father ought to have married me to money long before that. You see, I was no chicken then, and I don't think the old man acted fairly by me in not getting me a girl with money. Lots of girls with fifty or a hundred thousand would have

jumped at me. I was an awfully good-looking fellow then, and most awfully affectionate.

“Why didn’t I ask one of these girls to jump at me? That was the very worst of me then—I was so shy and modest. Although I knew I was exceedingly good-looking and affectionate, I couldn’t go up to a girl and say that to her, could I? No. But the old man could. My old man might have gone up to any girl and said: ‘There’s my son Edgar—an awfully handsome and affectionate and nice young fellow—wants a wife, and you really, you know, could not do better than accept his hand and heart.’

“That’s the way he ought to have worked for me, instead of which he did not work at all, but sat down, or went bothering about horses and dogs, and sessions and grand juries, and never gave a thought to the welfare of his son. I say my old man behaved very badly. Of course I love my father. Not a son in all the world loves a father more than I do mine. He is the very best father in Europe, couldn’t be better. You have no idea what a splendid old brick my

father is. Hale, sir, and hearty as a school-boy, and rising seventy. My dear boy, in all the world there isn't a finer or a jollier, or a more awfully good old fellow than my old boy.

"Children of my own? Of course I have children of my own. I have lots of my own; plenty of children, as many as any man wants, and more than any man can keep up who isn't rich or hasn't married money. Six, six children. They cost an immense lot of money out of the beggarly income we have. They eat up and drink up and wear up everything. I call them our Egyptian locusts.

"Am I fond of children? What a question! Why I adore children. They are the loveliest things on earth. There are my own—look at them; where could you match them for beauty or cleverness? Their mother, you know, is awfully clever. You should come and hear them at mental arithmetic. You would be amazed. They can add up, subtract, divide, and conjugate, all in their darling little heads. You can have no idea how I love them. I would not give one of them to get my hands into the pockets of the Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer. It may be a great misfortune to be poor, but it is greater to be childless. You see if a man is poor he can live on his poverty, but if a man has no children, what is he to do? —nothing. Don't you see he can't have any paternal affection at all.

“Quite so. I of course like the sunshine. It makes one feel so awfully jolly, and comfortable, and nice. I think to walk down Regent Street with the sun in your back and a good cigar in your mouth is one of the greatest pleasures in life. It's almost too fine for me. It makes me feel fearfully dismal, you know, to think of all the poor fellows who never have a chance of walking down Regent Street with the sun in their backs and a good cigar in their mouths.

“Well, yes, of course I should not like to get a sunstroke. It's a beastly dangerous thing, and generally knocks a man over for his life. There is a great deal to be said against hot weather. I am sure the Gulf's Stream ought to be looked to. I hate the warm weather too, when you get so beastly hot that you have no comfort in your life.

“For my own part I prefer to smoke a long

clay by a snug fire. I am so awfully poor that I cannot afford to smoke the best brands all day long, and cannot smoke anything but the best brands, so I have a pipe at night. You know there is nothing so nice as a nice clean straw and some good bird's-eye (I prefer Bristol), my feet in a good pair of loose roomy slippers, a bright fire, the smiles of my wife and children, a cup of tea or a bottle of sound claret, and all the sunshine of the world would not tempt me to get up and go out.

"Do I love the domestic circle, sir? What a question! I adore the domestic circle, sir, I worship it. You could not find in all England a man so devoted to the domestic circle. Good heavens! what can a man do better than smoke his pipe in the presence of his family? When we are alone my wife does not leave the dining-room, but sits with me, and the children sit also and we all have tea there. None of your grand formalities for me when I am in the bosom of my family. I love freedom and absence of restraint at the domestic hearth.

"No, I do not go out much. You see we can't afford it. If I were a rich man I

think I should go out a good deal. Of course I should enjoy going out. There is nothing in the world I would enjoy more. It is such a nice way to spend an evening among one's friends. When I was young there was nothing I loved so much as going out. I was never at home a single evening. I was always going or gone somewhere. Ah! but all that kind of thing is up if you are poor and don't marry money. Then you are prevented from going anywhere. You are glued for the rest of your life to a small room, no variety in your life, an eternal beefsteak and everlasting cold mutton. No, my dear sir, in poverty and married into poverty you are done with going out. The chances are you will be asked to hold the baby when you would have asked for a dance. There can be scarcely anything more dull and disagreeable than marriage on slender means.

"Politics? I am a most enthusiastic politician! I love politics. When I was young I was awfully fond of politics. They are so interesting and jolly, you know, and then there are all the pickings and other things.

“I am not a bigot, you know. I began as a Liberal, and then became a Conservative, and now I am just wondering if it isn't possible that a new party might be made by an amalgamation between the two parties below the gangway. I am in hopes we may be able to get the Speaker to help us. If we could only make him promise not to catch the eye of any member above the gangway, then we could have all the talking, and make all the laws just to suit ourselves and our friends. The only objection I have to the idea is that politics are such an infernal bore.”

## AT A BOARDING-HOUSE.

WE make up twelve bedrooms and three sitting-rooms in the boarding-house where I live. My boarding-house is typical, and I know the minutest detail, from the rent and taxes down to the profit John makes by selling for seven-and-sixpence to visitors meerschaum pipes superior to those they can get in a shop for twelve-and-six.

Our house is not in any roaring thoroughfare. It lies quietly in the dark obstruction of the upper end of a *cul-de-sac*. There is neither ostentatious bravery nor dishonouring cowardice in its external appearance. It has a modest door-plate, setting forth the name of its proprietor, "Mrs. Grame," and the condition in life it elects to discharge, that of

"Private Boarding House." The area railings are of a sedate and substantial dark olive colour, which seems to imply to the way-worn and exhausted traveller that mutton-chops obtained within could not prove otherwise than mellow and full of succulent nutriment. The outer door is open, to suggest the absence of obstruction to hospitality; the inner door is closed, to show the privacy of those entertained is respected, and that all chilling and neuralgic draughts are studiously combated. There is a large soft door-mat to brush away the dust of the weary world, and a gently tinted oilcloth to soothe the London-dazed eyes of country folk. You push the inner door open, there is a paralysing musical explosion over your head, and before you have time to decide upon flight or further progress inward, John is upon you with a comprehensive "Yes, sir," as though all things in nature and art were at his beck, and you had only to ask for photographs of the unseen side of the moon or ice from a glacier of Mont Blanc in order to get it.

Our John is permanent; our Jane is permanent. The individuality may and does

suffer change, but the institution is immortal. John is our boots, and Jane is our housemaid; no matter who is king, and equally no matter who is boots or housemaid. We change our Johns much oftener than we change our Janes. Johns don't take "talking to" as submissively as Janes; and Johns get drunk. The last John we lost because of intemperance had obtained in one week three several days' leave of absence in order to bury, first, a dear sister, then an esteemed niece, and lastly a most loved mother. Upon investigation it proved that had he asked leave of absence to attend the obsequies of Hercules or Raphael there would have been as little substantial reason for refusing him permission to go, since he had no sister, no niece, and his mother was buried before he had emerged from frocks.

Our Janes are less erratic. They acquire personal property out of perquisites, and remain longer. The Johns never acquire personal property, they spend money or hoard it. I do not presume to determine why Janes buy lamps, or kitchen utensils, or elbow-chairs, whereas Johns never have more property than

the clothes they stand in. The John whose dismissal I allude to, during the short time he remained with us, relied for encouragement and consolation on what he called "my mother's maxims," of which I can recall but one, namely: "An honest penny wears like brass." There was in his speech a sweet inconsequence which won my love. Thus, having one day asked him if he were not engaged to be married, he replied, "No, sir; but if you like I will sing a song for you."

At our house one of the sitting-rooms is used as a breakfast and tea room, and another as a drawing-room, while the third sitting-room is "private," and retained chiefly by delicate people who come up to consult London physicians, and by bridal parties. I once had a conversation with our Jane on the subject of bridal parties, and asked her how she could tell them from couples who had been years in the state of bondage. "Well," said she, "first when they come the gentleman won't let her put on her own slippers—afraid she might hurt her fingers—and he pays

double cab-fares ; but before they go away he does not object to her holding his overcoat for him, and he begins to dispute with the cabmen."

At eight o'clock in the morning John knocks at our doors, bids us rise, and at 8.30 breakfast is ready. We all sit down together, and not once in a month does a morning meal pass over without someone complimenting Mrs. Grame on the excellency of her bacon, and the perfection with which it is cooked. Bacon is our trump morning suit, as our brown bread and butter is our evening strong lead. The old frequenters of our house take the pride of personal vested interest in our bacon, and never fail to expatiate upon it with critical unction. It is always helped by the most honoured guest. The fish or steak falls to the lot of Mr. Haphazard, according as he may chance to sit by the dish. Mrs. Grame herself presides at the large tea-kettle resting on a stand, and always suggests the guest to be honoured with the bacon. The conversation at breakfast is dry and arid. An allusion to

politics produces a moody and ominous silence. Men clear their throats and look defiantly at one another, and women ask demurely for butter or an egg, with the obvious intention of averting argument and bloodshed. Mrs. Grame demands of the most bellicose if he will not have a little more tea, and adroitly seeks to substitute for the Eastern Question the prospects of American beef exercising a perceptible reduction in the price of meat here. This is a triumph, for it brings all the women present into the conversation like a battle-cry among valiant troops, and the warlike sex is overcome by the clamour of the peaceful. Years' experience of our boarding-house has convinced me that women almost monopolise the talk of the breakfast-table, while at the tea-table their voices are scarcely to be heard. In the chill beginning of the untested day man's mind is preoccupied or vacant. It is concerned with the business presently to be undertaken, and as yet has not refreshed itself at the sweet fountains of the daily press.

We do not "dine in." We are supposed to

be scattered by the winds of amusement or trade at the ordinary midday dinner-hour, but at 6 P.M. we assemble once more to soothe our weariness with sardines, marmalade, lettuce, bread-and-butter, and tea. The conversational powers of the women are now buried in profound silence, over which booms and surges an ocean of male diapasons. Now are we of the warlike sex shotted with the heavy metal of the morning papers, and armed with keen rapiers from the vesper prints. Now the men are after dinner, and in a condition of bland argumentative aggression. They state startling facts with the confidence of fascination, and lay down wide theories with the dogmatic satisfaction of the schoolmen. This grey-bearded *savant* of Glasgow knows more about the tail missing in the human race than even Professor Darwin himself. Here a splendid-looking man of sixty ruddy autumns preaches violent republicanism to a pale-faced restrained-looking clergyman of the Church of England. The clergyman temporises and parries, and dodges and seeks to get under the ropes, all to no purpose. The

Republican, whose talk savours of the sea, holds him in a deadly embrace that admits of no unlocking, and the man of peace has no refuge but in vacant smiles and unexciting marmalade. That quiet-looking gentlemanly man at the end of the table, talking to the fair woman in blue silk, is a traveller for a great firm of Birmingham jewellers, and has just stated, in answer to his fair neighbour, that he has at present in his two cases rather more than fifteen thousand pounds' worth of jewellery. Here is a loquacious Irishman expounding the principles of Home Rule to a stolid Saxon, who, holding his head on one side, criticises the principles of the other with a freedom that seems to fire the blood of the son of the Sister Isle. This elderly worn man has just come back from some deeply desert-compassed colony of Africa, and is furtively showing a companion some photographs of the unlovely natives of the neighbourhood near which his sugar factory stands. That dark-skinned taciturn youth is a Southron. He eats and drinks in a silence as profound as that of a tropical forest at noon, and with

brows as dark as the history of the dusky race from whom come to him that curly black hair and the liquid depth of those mysterious sad eyes ; there is the spirit of the face of the sphinx in the meaning of his eyes.

## THE NEWSPAPER BOY.

THE Newspaper Boy is a product of latter-day civilisation. The beginning of this century knew no more of him than of the solar spectrum. He is two generations younger than gas and a generation younger than railways. He is the son of the abolition of the paper duty and a London evening paper. Within the three-miles radius he is younger than he looks; outside the three-miles and within the twelve-miles radius he is older than he looks. In many places—for instance, the south side of Fleet Street—he is a woman.

His characteristics within the three, and between the three and the twelve miles radius differ widely.

In the inner circle he is usually an adult

of the dubious age of an Irish "boy of the Kennedys." He must be over sixteen, he may be sixty-five. For, in the inner circle, one has need of strength. Here the competition is keen. There is rough edging and shouldering, and much depends on volume and pitch of voice. No puny pale boy of eleven could make a penny a day near Charing Cross, or London Bridge, or Ludgate Hill. The boy for these profitable centres must be not only prepared to call his wares and carry a dozen quires of newspapers, but he must also be something of a fighting man, and above all must have a power of weight-carrying self-assertion. Bland and docile manners will avail him nothing. He must have heavy boots to embarrass his competitor, and a ready shoulder as well to jostle him from the front of a customer. No timorous appeal beginning "Please, sir," will help him to a crust. No "gentlemen-of-the-English-guards-fire-first" form of treatment can be adopted towards the other boys. Life with the inner-circle boy is real; life is earnest, and the penny is its goal. You must, if you happen to be an inner-circle boy, be prepared

by every means in your power to take occasion by the hand and keep a particularly tight hold of occasion's hand until you wring the penny from it.

The inner-circle boy must be able to run half-a-mile without stopping to gain his breath, for he will have now and then to fall back upon his base of supply, and when the new edition has come out he must fly at lightning speed back to his hunting-ground. Not only must he be able to run back without pausing to take breath, but he must be so constituted as not to be in the least blown when he arrives on the field of action ; for what good could come of his being on the field of action unless he were able to shout the battle-cry and induce the enemy to advance by a rehearsal of things in store for him, as set forth on *The Standard*, under which he carries a bill ?

The necessity for height and strength does not end with the chances of conflict and the certainty of requiring speed. The weight of newspapers he is at any time obliged to carry would not tax the strength of a boy of ten. But how could a boy of ten, while running at the top of his speed, bear on one shoulder

a stout bundle of papers, and at the same time whip out and fold a single copy across his chest in a stiff current of wind? The most skilful of Roman charioteers could never have performed such a feat. The Roman would have torn the broad sheet in two, and sent half of it flying among the carriage and draught horses, causing dire accidents by the shying of the beasts.

The inner-circle boy must be nimble and alert. He must possess such dexterity in dealing with horseflesh and wheels as to seem to own a charmed life. He must be able to dodge in and out among moving cabs and prancing horses with as little chance of injury or death as a farmer walking on a Sunday evening among his haystacks. He must be able to measure with a nicety the degree of curve necessary to his back in order to let a swift-moving hansom pass him while he is negotiating the sale of a sheet to the occupant of a standing cab. Then he must be ready, on getting a beck from that fast-trotting cab, to rush after it and overtake it, and, while running beside it, rehearse loudly, high above the roar of traffic, the contents-bill of the

papers. While so running he must be able to draw a single sheet out of the bundle he carries on his shoulder, fold it, thrust it into the hansom, and take the money in the end of the same hand that holds the paper.

Then he must possess a rare selection of mental gifts. His knowledge of subtraction must be peculiar, but peculiar in only one way. The remainder, when he gives change, must be always rather less than would satisfy a clever and impartial auditor, if the transaction had been submitted to him. Three from twelve leaves eight is a favourite sum of his.

When he sells a halfpenny paper he must affect not to believe so fine a gentleman as his customer could have a knowledge of such a degrading coin as a halfpenny. This he does when you give him a penny by touching his hat and saying, "Thank you, Captain," as he turns away from you.

The poet sees likenesses between things and things, the logician sees differences. Now in the matter of coins of the realm the boy of the inner circle must be a poet. For his life he could not impress on his mind the difference between a half-crown and a two-shilling piece.

For years he has tried and failed, and, to the credit of his intelligence be it said, all his favour goes to the decimal coin. Try to get him to take any notice of a half-crown and you will fail miserably.

He seems to have an instinctive knowledge of a half-crown, for no sooner does it touch his hand than he drops it into his pocket out of sight. He does not place it familiarly in his mouth, or affectionately between his lips as he does a sixpence, shilling, or two-shilling coin. Then he draws up from the depths of his pocket a variety of other coins, and, supposing you are buying a *Globe*, hands you back one shilling and elevenpence.

To this settlement you object, saying you have given him half-a-crown.

“'Alf-a-crown,” he repeats incredulously after you. “Did you give me 'alf-a-crown, sir? Blessed if I didn't think it was two shillings. Here you are, sir, honour bright! Here's your change,” and he hands you fivepence.

In the latter little transaction he is successful, for you do not remember until you are round the corner, and unwilling to go back, that you should have got sixpence.

In addition to his arithmetical gifts, the Newspaper Boy of the inner circle must have imagination governed by discretion. Mankind is not, alas, sufficiently bloodthirsty or immoral as to make the evening papers always nice! And yet the evening papers must be sold in order that the Newspaper Boy may enjoy cakes and ale later on. Accordingly, he is compelled to give his inventive faculty a chance of contributing to the support of his body.

Hence he abandons his familiar haunts because he does not wish to injure his business connection there and because policemen are too thick there, and betakes himself to some decorous street which is solemnly settling down to its after-dinner doze. Then cries startle the repose of Marwood Street. Shouts of "Horrible murder in Marwood Street! Great victory of the British over the enemy! The Bishop and the Barmaid! Special. Special paper." When he gets into Calcraft Street he alters the locality of the murder to that street, and so on until he has sold all the papers or is arrested for obtaining money under false pretences.

The Newspaper Boy of the outer circle differs in almost every respect from the other. He is generally less than sixteen years of age; thin, slight, weak-kneed, infirm of purpose, timid, retiring, voiceless save for his shrill calls.

He may have a great Byronian soul, but it shows itself in no way. He sneaks slowly and sadly along the area railings, or by the garden walls with as placid an indifference as though he was not the Mercury of the Fleet Street gods. He usually has weak eyes and an undeveloped snuffle.

His face has the expression of an outcast, and none of the clothes he wears have been made for him. His boots are two sizes too large, and display ancient alluvial deposits. His hair is straight, and hangs in irregular tongues down his neck.

He does not whistle as he walks for want of thought, but he usually has concealed in his hand some curious specimen of solid food, which he consumes by pressing it against his upper teeth without opening the hand or allowing the under teeth to lend their aid.

There is no speculation in his business, no fierce struggle for custom, no wearing rivalry. To come from the inner to the outer circle as a Newspaper Boy is something like a barrister in the full practice of a foremost Q.C. accepting a puisne judgeship, or like a disputatious occupant of the Front Bench in the Commons going up to the House of Lords.

All the custom an outer-circle boy wants is ready at his hand. He is one of five, six, a dozen boys employed by the one master to deliver papers to people in the neighbourhood. Now and then he may sell an evening paper or a "Family Herald," but as a rule he handles little money. If his master gets and sends out the Sunday papers, he has a chance of disposing of a few copies to chance customers.

The Newspaper Boy of either circle is the last and humblest minion of the mighty press. He forms, for all practical purposes, the link which completes the telegraphic circle, and carries the news of the world to the breakfast-table. His act is the final one in the development of Caxton's great import, the most

momentous and potential import ever brought into the country.

The Newspaper Boy is the discharging-rod in the wonderful intelligence machine. He touches the charged press and the conducting public, and so sets facts and opinions together. The proprietor supplies the capital and the business staff, the editor finds the literary staff. The manager, or the proprietor, or the editor, engages the foreign correspondents. The chief of the reporting staff regulates the shorthand writers. The sub-editor or the manager controls the writers of news paragraphs. The printer arranges all about the composition and make-up. The chief engineer sees that everything in the machine-room is ready for the casts when they come out of the stereotyping-room. The paper is worked off and sent out to the agents by the publisher. The agents sub-divide their lots and forward the sub-divisions to their various clients. The clients have omitted to get Newspaper Boys, and all London is without any hint of what has gone on for twelve hours. The last link has not been forged, and for what London can

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know to the contrary, the Russians may be encamped at Rosherville, the Claimant liberated, the Queen deposed, and the Claimant proclaimed King, with Dr. Kenealy as Premier, and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, assisted by Earl Coleridge, as Public Prosecutor.

## THE IRRITABLE MAN.

THE Irritable Man is fifty years of age, stout, bull-necked, thick-set, apoplectic-looking, clean shorn. He has had to work for a living, and he has worked hard and made a position. Having had to work himself, he holds that no man who has not worked is worth keeping on earth. He is strongly self-assertive and dogmatic. He does not brook contradiction or question. He is perfectly sure of everything he says, and equally sure everything anyone else says is wrong.

He will have no cat or dog in the house. Cats are so sly and so soft-footed that they come upon you, and you have no notion how near they are until they have knocked down a vase or got their heads into the milk-jug. They

are a sly, sneaking race, enough to wear out the wits of any man with nerves. Dogs are rude and rough and boisterous. They are always dashing hither and thither, and poking their noses into this place and into that, and jumping up on a couch or a chair, or a bed in rooms where they have no right to be, into which they get by accident, and out of which they never go without doing mischief. They bark when anyone knocks at the door, and then they bark out of vexation and disappointment when no one does knock. They are unqualified nuisances, and ought to be all shot down.

He is married, and has a family. He ignores both his wife and family as much as he possibly can, and uses them only as provocatives of his bad temper. He has a subtle instinct for discovering all the weak points of his own establishment, and tracing all these defects to a neglected order of his, and the heartless carelessness of his wife.

If there is a pane of glass broken in the attic he gets a cold in his head from it while sitting at luncheon. If a corner or edge of a carpet turns up he is sure to trip over it.

When he is helping the soup he may be relied upon to have the ladle knocked out of his hand by the servant. He always comes home when the friends of his wife who are least endurable to him have just arrived. He is coming round the corner at the very moment the baker's man is kissing the parlour-maid. And on each of these little incidents or accidents he can hang a long tirade.

At luncheon he says: "There must be something wrong in the house. I know there is. I feel there is. Something must be gone wrong somewhere. Always one thing or another going wrong with this house. I say there *is* something wrong with this house. Have any of the windows been taken in? or has anything happened to the roof? I feel cold and wretched all over. There now, let no one try to excuse this house. It's a detestable house, and the worst of it is that *we*"—with such emphasis as causes the pronoun to shift its meaning from the first to the second person and from the plural to the singular, *i.e.* from him to his wife—"and the worst of it is that *we* do not in the least endeavour to make the house more inhabitable than it is. We

neglect the house. *We* give no mind to the house, and the house gives *us* catarrh." Here the last pronoun changes only from the plural to the singular—*i.e.* from *us* to *me*. "Would you, my dear, be kind enough to send one of your servants upstairs to find out what is the matter?"

In the concluding sentence the possessive pronoun "your" preceding "servants" has a more elaborate signification, and suffers a more complicated change than any of the former ones. It means: The servants who are in reality my servants, whom I pay, and who ought to be thoroughly efficient, but who, owing, madam, to your criminal carelessness and gross mismanagement, are utterly worthless, and a source of trouble and worry rather than of help.

"I am sure I don't know what will be the end of all this inattention to most essential precautions. Everyone of any intelligence knows that few things are more dangerous than badly-secured carpets. You are walking along, thinking of something of consequence, when suddenly your foot is caught by the carpet, you are shot forward, and your family,

if they take the trouble to discover what has made the noise, find your lifeless body at the foot of the stairs. Nothing seems to go well in this house. Indeed everything appears to be at its very worst here. I don't know how it will all end. I am sure if I knew how to mend matters I would. If I knew of anyone who could look properly after the house I'd employ that person. But I don't know anyone, and the whole place is going to rack and ruin. I have a great mind to sell off all the furniture by auction and take apartments. If we were in apartments, and any accident arose from imperfectly-secured carpets, we should have our redress. But in one's own house one has neither protection nor redress.

"John! John! What on earth do you mean? Didn't you see the ladle in my hand, and wasn't it easy for you to guess that I was going to put some soup in the plate, and still, notwithstanding, you touch my elbow and spill the soup all over the table? Anything to equal such awkwardness I never saw. It is fortunate we have no one dining with us, or he would be sure to say that I had put a

stable-help into a tailed-coat, and given him charge of the sideboard. Upon my word it is nothing short of downright dishonesty for servants to be so awkward. A man in your position, John, is paid more wages than a stable-boy, and is supposed to be more handy. What is the fact? You are much less handy than any intelligent stable-boy. You are hasty in your movements; you don't look before you spill the soup all over the table. You destroy the pleasure of everyone at the table, and, John, it is no merit of yours that a gentleman's or lady's dress has not been ruined at the same time, for if anyone happened to be seated there, gentleman or lady, the coat or dress would certainly be completely spoiled. When you were engaged for this place it was distinctly understood that you were qualified to wait at table, and even that you had had experience of such work. Look at how things turn out! Don't apologise and try to explain, John. You see very plainly before your eyes that soup spread all over the cloth. Now, if you were to talk until the crack of doom, you could not undo

that. And is the man who sends the soup flying all over the table and the people round it (for it is only an accident in your favour that no one happened to be in that seat), fit to wait at table, and justified in demanding the wages of a man who *is*? Nonsense, John, nonsense. Don't say a word in your defence. You have no defence; and even if you *had*, would it undo that mess you have made there?

"It is strange, my dear, that I always do happen to come home just as your cousins, the Wilkinsons, have dropped in to see you. It is strange, my dear, and unfortunate as well. For although I have no objection to your cousins coming to see *you*, I have a great disinclination to meeting them, for I know they don't care for me or want to see me; and, my dear, I know I don't care for them, or want to see them. They worry, they distract me, and my only wonder is how I preserve any trace of health, with all the annoyances I am subjected to. Of course, my dear, I don't blame you for the unpleasant qualities of your relatives. You are not responsible for your relatives or

their qualities. But while I would not, for any consideration, break with them, I cannot help my feelings, and I cannot bring myself to look on your cousins, the Wilkinsons, with anything short of abhorrence. What *can* bring them here so often I'm sure I can't tell. It is not the cordiality of *my* reception, I am quite certain. *I* always show them that their calling may be a surprise, but I do not add the manner of one who was surprised *and pleased*. No. The very look of that whiskered coxcomb, old Wilkinson, makes me feel wild. Why does he always hold one's hand so long? I am always thinking while he grins and holds my hand and looks into my face with a smile which he thinks killing, that he is trying to find out by the feel of my hand if there is any likelihood of my dying soon, and is trying by that hideous smile to induce me to leave something to those detestable red-headed children of his. I can't very well cut those Wilkinsons, and I can't very well help dying some day; I can very easily and very pleasantly help leaving anything to him or his detestable brood. These people perplex

and worry me more than I can ever tell. I hope, my dear, they are not coming soon again.

“I don’t think, my dear, that you are in the least careful of what kind of servants *we* get. I am sure, my dear, that the last thing you, as the mother of daughters, could desire, is that anything approaching an impropriety should take place under our roof. And yet what do I find? To my great shame and anger, what do I find? That we are sheltering under this roof at present a creature whose conduct is far from what it ought to be. You may start, but when I tell you that the creature I speak of is *not* a man—the unworthy being to whom I allude is neither more nor less than a woman—neither more nor less than a woman, you understand—you, as a mother of daughters, ought to have had a better care than to be so imposed upon, and so to imperil the atmosphere of your children’s home. But you will have no words for your horror and amazement when I tell you that this unworthy young

person is not only unworthy, but seems to pride herself on her shame. She is brazen, madam. She is bold and barefaced in her acts. She makes no stand for decency, but under the shadow of the side-door—under the shadow of the side-door of this very house—she allows the baker's man to—to give her a kiss! A loud kiss—a loud kiss, too, which could be distinctly heard at the front gate!

“Now what are we to think of such conduct taking place in a house where there are daughters? I tell you, my dear, we shall have the butcher's boy making love to our eldest daughter next, and the greengrocer running away with the second. All this does worry and fret me. I wonder how I keep alive. If you were only more careful I don't think it would be necessary for me to die of a broken heart, but, as things go at present, I don't see any other end before me. It is all worry and anxiety whichever way I turn, and I really shouldn't mind how soon I died, only I feel confident the worry of the undertakers would rouse me up, and

I should have had all the trouble of dying for nothing."

The Irritable Man lives to a great age. The Custodian of the Wicked delays as long as possible entering into personal intercourse with him.

## PRINTING A PAPER.

It is a curious thing that the medium by which the vast majority of knowledge travels is an article of industry whose manufacture is very little known. Most intelligent people have a general knowledge of how metals are cast, and fabrics woven, how bread is made, and furniture manufactured, but very few have even a vague idea of the processes which go to construct a book or a newspaper out of so many engravings, sheets of MS. and of paper. We are not now talking of technical knowledge, but of general knowledge. Intelligent people know there is a printer between the MS. and the printed sheet ; but of what the printer does to transform the blurred MS. into the simple and stainless sheet of print,

they have no notion. Many authors whose names are spread over all the land have never been in a printing-office, and have no clearer notion of what goes on there than the ordinary farmer or nobleman.

Suppose we follow the course of a sheet of manuscript from the moment it arrives at the editorial room until its substance appears in all the glory of print. Let us imagine the manuscript is a poem from a provincial contributor. We select the case of the provincial poem because few copies of verses from the provinces find their way into a composing-room, and we may as well give a provincial verse-writer a chance, even though the poem and the chance are imaginary.

The "Ode to the Thrush" arrives on the morning of the day before publication. The editor of *The Tuesday Fencible* is early on Mondays, and arrives at the office at half-past eleven in the forenoon. There are thirteen letters in all for him. Six of these he knows all about; they are from regular contributors whose "stuff" he never looks at in MS.; he always waits for a proof. Of these he merely

breaks the covers, looks at the notes accompanying the MS., and puts the MS. by him on his table ready for the printer's boy. The seven other letters he leaves by for awhile ; has a chat with his sub about salmon or the incivility of a railway porter ; then with a sigh he drops back in his chair and leisurely looks over the superscriptions on the unopened seven. The six have all been addressed to him by name ; the others are all addressed to the editor. He selects the thinnest first, breaks the cover and looks at it.

He calls out to his sub : " Here's Jones threatening an action for our article the week before last on the degeneracy of the Joneses and the decay of the once proud and numerous family."

" All right. That's good," says the sub, who is very busy, and hears imperfectly. " They have been waiting for that all the morning at the printer's : send it over at once."

The editor slips the letter into an envelope and addresses the envelope to the solicitor of the paper, with the brief comment, " We'll fight him."

Having disposed of this matter, the editor breaks open the envelope containing the "Ode to the Thrush." He reads out a stanza.

"What's that?" asks the sub.

"A poem."

"Oh!" cries the sub, in a hopeless way, as much as to say, "Are they at that kind of thing still in this valley of tears?"

The editor likes the verses, thinks he'll print them, and puts them back into the envelope: he'll ask Brown what he thinks of them when Brown comes in by-and-by. When Brown comes in he likes the verses, suggests two alterations, which the editor makes, and then takes out a stanza. The poem is placed with the MSS. of the regular contributors. Presently a yellow-faced boy, who looks the personification of meek humility, and has an engaging and disarming list to port, comes in, cap in hand: "Any copy, sir?" That's the printer's boy. The awful printer's boy. The printer's boy is historic. He is embalmed in the curses of journalists and the screams of hack-writers. To see that boy at the door late at night when your last idea is gone and a column of brilliant leader or stinging para-

graphs has to be written someway, and to hear that meek yellow-faced boy saying, "More copy, sir; the men are standing idle," is to know a grief too deep for tears, a wrong the murder of that boy there and then would not avenge. The editor has no dread of this boy now, for it is still early and he has a good deal of copy. He slips all the MSS. that are to be set up into an envelope and hands the envelope to the boy.

The boy goes down the stairs from the editorial-room and ascends another staircase five minutes' walk distant. This second staircase leads to the composing-room, and is most emphatically an unpleasant and disagreeable staircase. Each stepfront is shod with iron, and each step defended by an odour more choking and unanalysable than the last. The smell is not downright pestiferous. There is no fairly-defined principle in it. The foundation of it is not gas, or steam, or mould, or turpentine; but there are, so to speak, murmurs of all these smells, rumours of them, tantalising echoes of them defying pursuit.

The composing-room itself is not over sweet or fresh, but is a paradise compared to the stairs. The boy hands the parcel to the

printer, who breaks open the envelope, looks slowly through the copy, makes a rough "cast off," which means an estimate of the quantity of printed matter the copy will furnish; then he flattens down the copy on "the stone," a large thick slab of slate or iron. He calls aloud: "Any gentleman out?" Whereby he means, does any compositor want more copy. He gives those who want it some of what he has just received.

This composing-room is about thirty feet long by fifteen wide, and from it are doors into other composing-rooms, where men are setting up the type for books, magazines, pamphlets, posters, etc. There are about twenty men at work in this room. Each man stands in front of his case, and picks up the types one by one and drops each into his iron "stick."

Owing to several reasons, the turn of the "Ode to the Thrush" does not come until ten that night. Now the composing-room is in a fierce blaze of gas, and the air is hot and burnt out. The Ode is on a case; half of it is set up. The three stanzas in type already are on a galley close to the man who is engaged

on the poem. Every fourteen lines he completes in his stick he empties out on that galley. Now there is a pause in the work. The tea has arrived on a vast tray. The men sit how and where they can, some on stools, some on the iron frames in which the type is ultimately bound up. Some are playing cards on the stone, some are playing draughts on their knees, some are reading.

In a short time work is resumed, and Mr. Robinson, who is engaged on the Ode, at last finishes the setting-up of the type. The galley is now full, and a rough proof is pulled.

Here is the proof-reader. By his side stands a boy who reads out from the MS. in a tone and pronunciation of sublime indifference to the meaning, the Ode. The reader goes carefully along the lines of the proof with his pen, and stops the boy whenever the vocal and printed versions differ. As the reader follows the lines with his eye, he makes a number of marks on the proof. These are errors of spelling, punctuation, letters turned upside down, letters of the wrong size, etc. When these marks are "done"—that is, when the corrections indicated have been made—

another proof is pulled and sent away to the editor, who makes final alterations. When the editor's marks have been "done" (there is no time to send the author a proof), the poem is ready to be "made up." No matter how limp compositions may be, the printer makes them all up; although they use for starch a little water to prevent the type falling apart.

The poem is now lifted into a galley that will hold a page of the paper, rules are put round the page of type, and the whole is tied with twine, pushed off the galley and arranged on the stone. One side, or portion of one side of the paper is wedged into an iron frame, which is carried by men down to the machine-room in the basement or on the first-floor.

The machine-room is not nearly so well lighted as the composing-room, and there are comparatively few men in it. The formes (iron frames and type) are now laid on the bed of the machine, and the men begin to "make ready." Making ready consists in adopting measures to secure a proper distribution of pressure from the cylinder on the

type metal. *The Tuesday Fencible* is not illustrated, and the "make ready" does not take long. Two boys stand by a pile of paper, and in a little time the machine begins to revolve, the boys push in a sheet of paper, and after a few "spoils" have been thrown aside a copy of *The Tuesday Fencible* is at your disposal.

In all this we have been following the fortunes of a small paper through a general office. The process with a great daily is different.

## THE ANECDOTIST.

THE Anecdotist is a man in the prime of life ; well-favoured, bland, well dressed, well kept. He has a smooth face, a merry eye, a sly mouth. His eyes wink as naturally as the hair of another man's head grows downwards. He can wink each eye separately, a feat which is the envy of the young of his friends. Those who are very intimate with him declare that he can wag his nose. But this is put forward rather as a proof of prodigal faith in his merits and accomplishments than as a matter of necessarily substantial belief. At all events he can place a large octavo volume on his head and, by a sudden snapping down of the eyelids, shoot the book twelve feet to the front.

He has a small drawing-room entertainment

which, for the sake of euphony and probability, he calls the O'Mulligans. It is performed with three pieces of cork and three plates. The three pieces of cork are first put under one plate, and the Anecdotist informs his audience that the family of the O'Mulligans, being quarrelsome, often fell out so badly that father, mother, and grown-up daughter fled the paternal roof—the mother and daughter going to the mother's people (a family by name O'Finnigan), while the father, having reason, money, and national spirit on his side, devoted himself to the consumption of Irish whisky at a public-house. The plates are now turned up, and the one representing the O'Mulligan roof-tree, under which the family had been observed a moment before, has no more trace of inhabitants than that other famous Irish home where a woman, being asked if there was any-one within, answered that "There is nothing in but the fire, and that's out."

The right-hand plate, the humble abode of the O'Finnigans, is now removed, and there are disclosed to view the mother and daughter of the O'Mulligan, who with much shrieking and weeping are detailing their wrongs and

woes to their people, and are in the highest state of enjoyment.

The left-hand plate, the haunt of vice, is now removed, and O'Mulligan discovered in a condition which would seem to warrant Sir Wilfrid Lawson in making one even of his worst jokes if he were sure of keeping the unfortunate O'Mulligan at home; the way of course to effect this would be to allow Sir Wilfrid to hurl his joke at the doomed man in all places whatever, save and except his, O'Mulligan's, own house.

The plates having been replaced, the ladies of the house of O'Mulligan and the whole faction of the O'Finnigans hold a council of war, when an aide-de-camp of the O'Finnigan party dashes in with the soothing intelligence that the O'Mulligan is "blind," thereby conveying to his auditors that the O'Mulligan is in a fully-developed and highly-finished state of intoxication. Upon this the fugitives set out in search of the head of the house, and find him in the condition and in the house described—that is, the plate to the left. This plate, being lifted, the facts are found to be as stated. The plate is returned to its former

position, the audience are informed that the wife and daughter of O'Mulligan having a forgiving spirit, bear their lord and master back to the ancestral halls—that is to say, the middle plate, under which please find the three. What, only two! How is this? Ah, true, one of the party was under the table, and (stooping down and picking up something) here he is! So ends the entertainment. Some kindly old ladies who are present declare their conviction that Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke are criminally neglecting their interests by not at once taking the Anecdotist into partnership; while a few ladies of grave temperament think a good effect might be wrought on the drinking habits of the people by giving at Exeter Hall this entertainment, strengthened at the end by showing that when O'Mulligan was brought home by his faithful wife and daughter, he, owing to the sad plight in which he was, fell downstairs and broke his neck.

But it is as a teller of remarkable and interesting personal incidents that the Anecdotist distinguishes himself.

“Julius Cæsar! Talking of him reminds me of a thing I read once of him when he

was young. He was about ten at the time, when walking on the Pincian Hill, whom should he meet but Tom Pompey. Tom had a pocketful of marbles, and knowing that Julius had fourteen hundred, the season's winnings, to say nothing of forty striped taws, he held out his hand full of marbles to little Julius and said, 'Hodd or heven for hall that's in the 'and.' Tom had at that time a horrid Whitechapel accent, and knew no more of h's than a skylark does of dotted crotchets. 'Heven,' shouted young Julius, mimicking Tom's accent and redundant h's. Upon counting it was found that Tom had eighteen. 'Hit's the best two hout of three, Julie,' said Tom in a persuasive voice. 'His hit hindeed,' said Julius, mimicking him again. 'No fear. Look, Pomp, hit's the best one out of two'—Julius was always very shaky about his comparatives—'and heither you or hi his the best. So pull hoff, hold fellow, hand we'll fight hit hout.' They did so, and Julius licked him all to bits. That was Julius's first victory over Tom, and the man who noted the fight said it foretold Julius's final victory.

"You know Tennyson's poem, 'Ask me no

more,' but I lay the odds you don't know the origin of it. Well, some years ago the laureate was walking through Mr. Gladstone's demesne. The poet was delighted with the splendour of some of the trees, when suddenly his ear was disturbed by the sound of a woodcutter's axe; and going in the direction from which the sound came he found the owner of the place, with coat and waistcoat flung off, plying his axe vigorously. The poet was greatly shocked at the idea of cutting down the magnificent tree upon which the statesman was engaged. He, however, as you may imagine, felt himself in no position to expostulate; so he slipped away unobserved. As he wandered under the trees the memory of his own poem, 'The Talking Oak,' came into his mind, and his eyes filled with tears as he reflected upon the agony likely to be imposed upon a sensitive, friendly, kindly tree, such as he had given a tongue to, if it should be subjected to such unkind treatment. He then conceived the thought of writing the death-song of 'The Talking Oak,' and he went so far as to do the first line, which ran thus:

Axe me no more, or I with bark reply.

Subsequently, however, he did not approve of this line, as it seemed open to the objection of being construed in two different ways, one of which had a vulgar twang, from the mere risk of which he shrank instinctively. Later on he altered the line into :

Ask me no more, the moon may draw the sea.

This he let stand and made fit to a totally different idea. By-the-way, I have often heard of the moon painting the sea silver ; but how on earth, or in the heavens for the matter of that, the moon can 'draw' the sea I am lost to find out.

"How William Morris came to design wall-papers first, and the circumstance which led him to his fantastic greens and greys are not generally known. It occurred in this way : When he was a boy he lived in the country, and like most other boys he was fond of fruit. The village was small, and in it could be found no regular fruiterer's shop. Boys got their supply of apples and so on from an old woman, who sat at a corner and displayed her wares on the top of two soap-boxes. In the body of these soap-boxes she kept her own

dinner (until dinner-time), her knitting when she was not busy, a few tracts to be taken out or put in, according to the character of the person approaching, and some cabbage-leaves. Now all the soft fruit, such as strawberries, gooseberries, currants, etc., sold by her for consumption off the premises, she wrapped up in cabbage-leaves, and little William Morris was a regular customer for white currants in the season. Holding the cabbage-leaf in his little left hand, and helping himself to the idealised tartness of the fruit, the future designer sauntered leisurely home. When he got there he ascended to his own room in order to devote himself to the study of the Sagas, which even then exercised a strong fascination over the boy. Often becoming absorbed in the history of a Norse story, he completely forgot the unconsumed currants, and placed heavy books on the still encumbered cabbage-leaf. As it may be supposed, this made a mess. The boy was much struck by the peculiar effect of the burst currants on the green leaf, and he not only preserved all of them, but having partially dried them in the sun he hung them around his rooms, so that

while he lay awake in the mornings he might fancy he reposed under the great roof-tree of Sigurd the Volsung. It was while gazing on these 'accidental designs' that he conceived the idea of employing something of the kind for permanent mural decoration.

"You see that house, the one over there—it was built in the time of Queen Anne. It was then a storey higher than it is now, but the accumulation of rubbish has covered up the ground-floor. It wasn't in that house that Cardinal Wolsey died, but another. It is just the kind of house the great Cardinal would have died in, but unfortunately it was not built for some time after his death. Well, a great friend of mine lived in it once. He was a man of very miserly disposition, and having got the house cheap, he felt it an intolerable grievance that he should be paying rent for a storey which was of no earthly use to him. Although the earth had risen above the ground-floor, so that my friend had to get in at the first-floor window, the lower rooms had not become filled up so that they might be used as cellars. But he had no use for such extensive cellars, and he let them

to the owner of a circus for the storage of two tigers which he wanted to tame by hunger and darkness. The two tigers were run in all right, but they kicked up such a row that my friend could not get a wink of sleep, and the neighbours became alarmed. My friend was afraid to come downstairs. The neighbours could not make out what the awful sounds were, and ultimately the police broke in the door, and burst through into the 'cellars,' from which the tigers escaped. Well, my friend had, after the facts were discovered, to leave his cheap house and move into a dearer one ; it broke his heart, and he ended his days in a lunatic asylum."

## THE OLD MAID.

HER figure, like her heart, is large. She is no longer young in years. She is past fifty, and neither boasts of her willingness that the fact should be known nor tries to conceal the fact. Her beauty, which was once sweet and bright, is gone ; but the lovely after-math of the heart has regenerated her disposition. Those who knew her well never think of her years. Everything else that belongs to her is so much at the service of those she loves, that they take her years and divide them, as it were, among themselves. She was baptized Harriet, but is called " Aunt Nell." The cause of this departure from her just name none of the young people around her know.

She was the youngest of four sisters, and the most beautiful. She loved once, and once only; but after passing many happy hours in her society, and making love to her, he discovered another whose society he found more entertaining, and to whom he made love which ended in marriage. She was only two-and-twenty then; now she is, as we have said, upwards of fifty. Her disappointment pierced her heart, but no bitterness entered through the wound. She filled up the void, not with gall, but with tolerant gentleness.

Now she lives in a good quiet road in the West. She was her father's favourite daughter, and he left her ten thousand pounds, and she got another ten thousand through an old uncle who died in India. Her great delight is in her nephews and nieces. She likes "the children" best when they are past babyhood, and she prefers girls to boys. Many of those who call her Aunt have no more right to do so than the children of the coachman next door.

She loves the grandchildren of her eldest brother best of all, and nothing gives her

such pleasure as to have one or two of them up from the old Norfolk home where her nephew now lives, his father being dead some years. She is no fool about these children, and her own servants can play no tricks with her. But she loves bright soft young cheeks and plenty of laughter. It is a saying of hers that when young people laugh old people grow innocent and unworldly. She is not worldly herself, but she makes no inroad on her fortune, of which she has the willing power. She always knows exactly the buying power of a sovereign, for she has often spent one disadvantageously for others, and it is a grave responsibility to get only fifteen shillings' worth of goods for a pound when you have, as it were, constituted yourself agent for someone else.

She takes more interest in the children of the coachman next door than in all the niggers in Africa. She never gives twenty pounds for the conversion of the Chinese, because she thinks very little of the Chinese, and has a theory that people who have to be converted aren't worth the trouble. But this notwithstanding, she is true to the Church and State.

Her father was once in Parliament, and then she heard much of politics ; but she doesn't read the political portion of *The Times*.

She is rather Low Church, and prefers a good Protestant, as she understands it, to a Ritualist. She has a respect for parsons, but doesn't think them impeccable, and always receives any statement attributed to one of them with more caution than usual. She is a sincere Tory, without a clear knowledge of what she binds herself to by saying so. She doesn't see what you want of two names for one thing, and declines to allow that she is a Conservative.

She doesn't believe in a frigidly religious Sabbath. She allows novels to be read or picture-books looked at on that day. She goes to church only once on Sundays, and keeps her affairs with Heaven in good order. She does not think the body is only the filthy vessel of the spirit. She has no notion of broaching a heresy ; but lives in a continual state of protest against something said in sermons.

She thinks men who beat their wives ought to be hanged on the spot, and yet holds

that capital punishment is a most awful crime. She can read and work by gaslight still, without spectacles. She never thinks of the past when she has little ones about her. She never weeps, unless sometimes at night when the little ones that are others' have gone away, and she fancies she hears their voices, and then knows that these voices are the voices of those that never were and never shall be—the spirit voices of her own.

## IN THE GARDENS.

THOSE who live at a distance from London, who wander through meadows chin-deep in buttercups and cowslips, who know no more of what this big City is than can be gleaned from multiplying by a hundred their familiar hamlet of forty thousand souls, pass away their lives in envy of our happy lot when damp and dismal winter is upon us, but burst out into a wild and insolent tone of triumph when summer winds are soft and summer lanes are cool and green. Once the sun comes north of the Equator, your hamleter turns up his nose to sniff the spicy breezes of his pine glen, and at the same time to deride the great City respecting the habits and manners of which we discourse in these veritable pages.

To his imagination London is a kind of inhabited catacomb. Huge warehouses rise up into the foggy air and blind up the heavens; vast cellars burrow under the earth as though in search of profounder darkness than can be produced above ground. Where its inhabitants are not choked with unsavoury dust they are sodden with unbecoming vapours. In all London there is no cool grateful shade, no glitter of sunshine upon trees, no grottoes of twilight greenery. All is hot and dry and stuffy where it is not worse, and worse it is in most places. The barely endurable odours are such as would spring out of a combination between the kitchen of the hamlet's club and the hamlet's mendicity washhouse; the unendurable odours defy realisation or analysis, and spare to kill merely that they may inflict life-long misery.

Ah, vain deluded hamleters ! We are now writing these lines within sight of St. Paul's. It is the middle of July ; our window is open. At the end of our little garden stands a row of slender ash-trees in full leaf, and between them and the ground a curtain of polished-leaved green ivy. There are roses on our bushes and

wallflowers by our paths. Down our window drops a thick Virginian creeper. The track of a slug is upon our back steps, and in a wild and unfrequented tangle of clothes-line poles, broken flower-pots, and convolvulus, is the lair of a frog, as wild and untamable as though all London still cowered within its ancient walls and towers, and where we now sit was a swampy desolate waste, haunt of the heron and snipe. Two thousand yards to our right is the common, which from end to end is longer than a bullet's flight, and across wider than ever bowman of Cressy sped shaft. A thousand yards to our left is the green, where five hundred twins may ride triumphant in their glittering chariots and "avoid the goal with glowing wheels." A thousand yards in the rear lies a park, spacious enough to give standing-room to the whole Russian army; and just at the end of the street is the "gardens." On all sides of us are great open spaces of grass, and trunks and boughs and green leaves. We in London here cannot escape the country in a half-hour's walk. At the end of every dozen streets there is a square or a green churchyard or a patch of garden; we are nowhere safe from

this incursion of spray and sward. No matter where you are in London, if you throw a glass of water into the air it will find its way to the roots of a tree or a flower. If the hamleter really loves unbroken lines of brick and mortar, let him remain where he is. The hay that grows in London would bury himself, his hamlet, and its thirty-nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine souls six fathoms deep.

The Gardens within the narrower limits of the City are gradually dying out ; but Greater London still contains many a broad open space of grass and arbours and flower-beds. Thither in the fine weather flock the weary, the curious, the idle, and the frail. Let us take one by the river, and observe it and those who lend it support.

It is a Saturday half-holiday, and all who can are hurrying out of the denser regions of London. It is only half an hour since we left Westminster Bridge, and we have already put down our sixpence and passed the turnstile into the North Tilford Gardens. The North Tilford is not a very aristocratic lounge. Although there cannot be less than three to

four thousand men, women, and children in the grounds, there is not one whose name you can find in Debrett. The majority of the men are artisans, clerks, shop-hands, and small tradesmen. The women are the wives, friends, sisters, cousins of the men. There is no absolute rudeness, but a good deal of horse-play. The humour is of the simplest order, and takes the form of practical jokes. Looking round at how the crowd comports itself, we feel the vigorous simplicity that prevailed in the times of which Chaucer wrote is not much diminished to-day, notwithstanding the lapse of centuries and the invasion of science.

Here is a group of sickly-looking Cockney lads, standing before an instrument intended for ascertaining the air capacity of the human chest. The man who presides over it is not a good salesman. He is neither fluent nor mysterious, and consequently is doing a bad business. The chestometer is enjoying a holiday so far. At length one of the deplorable-looking youths, the most deplorable-looking of all, steps forward and hands a penny to the man. The man dips the mouthpiece in a cup of water, wipes it in a towel, and then hands it to the

lad, explaining that all other means of testing one's strength are unsatisfactory and illusive compared to this. A more wretched-looking being than the lad, tube in hand, it would be difficult to find. He is about five feet four, sallow, lank, knock-kneed, thirty inches across the chest. He blows until two dull black vein-cords swell out of his hollow temples. "Ninety-eight!" cries the man, looking in amazement on the weakly youth; then he adds, gravely: "Go home. You ought to be ashamed of being so healthy. Go home, I say, and 'list in the Horse Guards, and try and do something for your unfortunate country." Later we pass by the same man, and hear him address the identical words to a Cumberland farmer who could take "Achilles by the hair and bend his neck." He of the chestometer is evidently a man of no great invention. He does not look as though he could compose that one speech. Who made it for him? When the youth dropped the tube and retired he seemed oppressed by the consciousness of singular ingratitude; the farmer laughs, shakes his powerful frame, and moves away with the easy gait of one who through good humour, and good humour alone,

refrains from doing grievous bodily harm to every man within reach who happens to be anything near a match for him.

Here is a maze, with gipsies at the centre and fortune-telling. It takes a little time to penetrate to the core, but in the end patience and perseverance conquer. Two yellow-skinned, dark-eyed, brightly-dressed sibyls, and five inquirers of the servant-girl type. The oracle is to be consulted in a kind of rude hut, half-formed of branches of trees and half of canvas. A brazier of charcoal or coke burns in the middle of the hut. The visitors are grave, timorous. Occasionally one makes a faint and startling attempt to laugh, but such levity does not meet the approval of her fellows nor of herself either, for after a second she repents and does penance in a more funereal face than any of the others. News of sweethearts is precious in a land where there are only nine men to every ten women.

Out into the open again. Ladies and gentlemen are here shooting with bow and arrow at targets. You get three shots for a penny, but, owing to the gentleness and suavity of the bows, the archers are compelled to discharge

the shafts at an elevation similar to that used with mortars in shelling towns. As a rule the tendency of the gentlemen is to draw the arrows beyond the head before letting go, and the result is somewhat wide and disquieting shooting. The ladies seem to regard effect more than result, and are satisfied when upon any terms they make "the tense string murmur." But at the target farthest from the gravel walk and most out of sight stands the figure of a young man. He has a dark, resolute face, and is sending arrow after arrow in the direction of that lattermost target, but never one into it. He is a tallow-chandler's apprentice, has been reading romances of sixty years ago, and is endeavouring to acquire a method of manslaughter approved of in the gallant days of old.

Men are trying their strength on that boss with the dial-plate above. The boss is fixed in the pit of a Russian's stomach, so that you can not only ascertain the weight in pounds of a blow from your shoulder, but relieve your feelings at the same time.

A steam merry-go-round, with lads and

lasses on the horses and in the coaches. The lads are gallant, hilarious, and festive; the lasses timid, coy, confiding, apprehensive of displaying ankles, and bewitching. Into one of the coaches has been got a very stout woman with a very fat face and very blue ribbons in her bonnet. Alas, poet! disguise it how you will, but we write prose, and are compelled to say that the motion has made her very green and very sea-sick.

In the centre of a boarded platform is a pagoda, and in this pagoda a band of eight performers, and on the platform a dancing-master and dancers. The dancers are grave, solemn, as though they were in momentary expectation of celebrating their apotheosis, and were anxious to preserve a fitting seriousness for the occasion.

There are concert-rooms in which the entertainments are of the music-hall class, and "rifle-galleries" where, having allowed the horizontal funnel of a penny steamboat to swallow you—you may fire at a mark about twenty feet off. There are Aunt Sallys and weighing-machines. At night the grounds

will be lighted up; in other words which we borrow, "there will be a feast of Chinese lanterns;" but we can't stop for that—so let us go.

By Jove! that gloomy young man is still pegging away at that farthestmost target.

## THE SPONGE.

THE Sponge has passed the golden prime of youth, and is a full-grown man. He is stout, florid, uneasy in his motions. He moves with great steadiness and weight, and has ever on his face a gentle and benignant smile. His clothes are never new, and one article of apparel, generally his trousers, is in a deplorable state of decay. He always wears a mourning band on his hat, and when you make any allusion to it he tells you a long story of bereavement of a dear, though distant, relative, from whom he had great expectations, but from whom, owing to his dying intestate, he has not received one single penny, there being other and nearer relatives of the deceased living.

According to his own account he comes of

a good stock, and has seen much better days. He never goes into minute particulars, but casts the gloomy air of romance round his earlier years. He remembers a time when he would have thought little of this or nothing of that extravagance, but now all is changed. Here he sighs loudly. Sighing, and with his eyes closed, casting melancholy glances at his former and more prosperous days, are two of his chief and most often employed accomplishments.

Apart from the melancholy reminiscences of his past affluence, he is a most bright, gay, and soothing companion, and never loses an opportunity of contributing to your complaisance or happiness. He cordially approves all your jokes, and recalls your olden wit when others are present. He listens to your stories with avidity, and, when you have finished, repeats the point as though the perfume of the humour could not be fully tasted on one application. Half an hour after you have told the story he begs of you to repeat the exact words in which the keen point is so carefully wrapped up. If he meets an acquaintance while you are by, he begins to tell the story,

breaks down when he is halfway, and begs of you to rehearse the most interesting portion.

He is never boisterous or explosive. His manner is warm and appreciative, without degenerating into vulgar enthusiasm. Your wife likes him better than you like him, your children absolutely worship him. He brings your wife some most interesting gossip about the Queen or the Princess of Wales. He tells her an account of an interview between a friend of his and the great Worth of Paris, of what Worth did and said, and how he cancelled the pale mauve silk dress, the material of which cost ever so much a yard, because his careless work-people had stuck two pins in a prominent place, and frayed the woof.

When he comes to your house, he has always under his arm an interesting book he has borrowed for your wife of an old friend, and in his pocket a puzzle or trick he has bought for a penny for your boys. He will play cat's-cradle with the younger children, and explain the current of the steam in the piston of a locomotive to your eldest boy fourteen years old. He will play

peep with the baby, and go down on all-fours and be horse to the boy of three.

He remembers the parlour-maid's name, and the ailments from which her mother suffers, and asks after the maid's and the mother's health. If there is a nearer one still, and a dearer one yet than them all, he never fails to make a sly and yet unembarrassing inquiry for him.

The Sponge never abandons his self-respect. He always talks as if he had a substantial fortune at his back. He boasts of the prodigality with which he has entertained long ago, or even up to this date; but he is always careful that the facts he names are beyond your power of verification.

He tells you how he had a couple of fellows you don't know—two fellows from the Channel Islands, or Galway, or Aberdeen—to sup with him at Evans's last night after the theatre. Whereas the truth about last night is that he lingered about the door of the Gaiety until the performance was over, when he picked up an acquaintance from whom he accepted a glass of sherry at the bar.

He tells you how he missed by an ace taking a charming little shooting-box in Scotland this year. He was offered the thing for two hundred and fifty for the season, and all was settled, when suddenly a cousin of the owner's came back from India, and being a passionate sportsman, the owner asked him to relinquish his claim, which he of course did rather than disoblige a man who had been long denied the pleasure of pulling a trigger at grouse.

A French family he knows very well has asked him to spend the month of November with them at Rouen, and he has serious intentions of accepting the invitation. One of his chief reasons for not deciding at once to go is that he is such a wretched sailor; always beastly sick; the very look of a steamboat through a good telescope makes him feel squeamish.

There is another reason for making him hesitate to accept that Rouen invitation. You see, a very dear friend of his who lives in Cheshire, the owner of several large salt-mines, is to be married in November, and he has been asked to the wedding, and he really thinks he

could not avoid going to that wedding; you see, his friend would take it very ill of him if he stayed away.

Face to face with all these splendid possibilities of his future, you must think yourself very lucky if you can secure him for a plain dinner under the family mahogany tree. His ordinary days are so intimately blended with matters and people so much more romantic than those you encounter on your way from year's end to year's end, that your obligation to him must be great when he has consented to taste a slice out of your homely leg of mutton or ribs of beef.

But when you do catch hold of him, and set before him your mutton or beef, he displays many qualities and accomplishments that win your admiration and gratitude.

If you have a few people to dine with you, and are not quite sure how they will get on, you can have no one more useful than the Sponge. He is so sympathetic a conversationalist, the crustiest cynic that ever turned wholesome wine into vinegar gives way before him, and is lured by him into taking a lively interest in some subject or other.

He will carve anything you may put before him as if he spent most of his life in a restaurant. If the joint or fowl is tough or badly cooked, he will treat it with as much skill as a doctor shows to the disease of a rich patient—that is, he will make it go as far and seem as much as possible.

He is not in the least an epicure himself. He can and will eat anything, and nothing can be so indifferent that he will not, while remaining silent as to its defects, discover and expatiate on some excellent quality he has discovered in it.

He professes to be a judge of wine, and claims to have tasted the finest brands in Europe. And yet he no sooner tastes your thirty-shilling claret than he looks up in surprised delight and envy, and declares he did not know that claret of precisely that quality was to be found in the cellars of more than three men in London—namely, the Duke of Brompton, Richardson (the great banker), and Subsidy (the famous member of the Stock Exchange).

Should two of your guests show any disposition to warmth in argument, he is between

them, and beats down their blades before either is pricked. Then he takes up the gauge of one of the combatants and engages him, but managing at the same time to modify the points under discussion, withdraw all the animosity, and finally wind up by showing that your guest and he have from the dawn of reason held the self-same views on the subject, the only difference being one of mere definition and the import of certain words.

If he finds he can be of no use in the dining-room, he steps off to the ladies very soon after they retire. Here he is the life and soul of the party. Although he does not sing himself, he has a great appreciation of music, and his criticism and comment have always in them that quality of knowledge which, when adroitly used in compliment, is so gratifying.

He can talk about the theatre and things fashionable, and is always able to point out one or two matters in which the Society have been misinformed.

He is willing to play cards, listen to a twice-told tale from a dowager, turn over the music leaves, expound the family album to a comparative stranger, hand round the

coffee, make up the fire, push tables or chairs this way and that, as they may be required, chat with a shy girl, and in fact do anything but misbehave himself or make love.

What he was when he was young no one knows, but now his manners are unimpeachable. His purse is very thin, and he lives in a precarious way; but it cannot be said he is quite useless, for he smoothes many contacts that otherwise would grate. He plays the part of the alkali between the water and the oil, and the result of his presence in an unblending company is the formation of the whole in the amiable compound—soft soap.

## THE VAGUE MAN.

THE Vague Man is on the borders of age. The flower of his manhood is passed, but he has not yet entered upon the period of decay. He is grizzled, not grey; round-shouldered, not stooped; deliberate in his gait, not feeble; his flesh has lost its hardness and roundness, yet wrinkles have forbore to appear. His eyes are of a neutral grey. He wears dull-coloured tweed suits, never covers his hands with gloves, and always has a mourning-band on his hat.

He is a widower whose children are all settled in the world. He can never tell off-hand how many children of his are living. He knows there were seven altogether; but has to count them up most carefully before

he is able to say whether five or six are still above ground. Then if asked how many boys and how many girls, he has to go over the list again, ticking off the boys on one hand and the girls on the other.

Six altogether, four sons and two daughters. "Are they all married?"

"Not all," he answers; "the girls are, and I think a few of the boys."

"Do they live in London?"

"No; at least not all. Some here and there, and the worst of it is that Jack is always writing from Emily's place, and Victoria is always writing from Harry's, and Emily is always writing from William's, so that I get fearfully confused, and never venture upon addressing any one in particular by name, but write a letter to them all once a week, beginning, 'My dear children and grandchildren.' This letter I send to my son Harry, whose address I always have by me in the body of a mortgage held by me on his place for money advanced to him, and secured by me for his children, by means of this mortgage."

"Any grandchildren?"

“ Oh yes, several. But I could not tell you how many, unless I had in my hand my jeweller’s bill containing the items for mugs, and even then I should be in some doubt, for often when I hear that one or other has had a young son or daughter I am in confusion, unless the matter is put very plainly, as to whether this is an old child or a new one, or merely a reminder that I have not sent the usual mug, ‘ With Grandfather’s Love. You see, if William writes me to say, ‘ Well, so Tom’s wife has got a young son, no fear of the name dying out this century——’ ”

“ By-the-way, have you got a son Tom ? ”

“ Let me see. Let me see. There is Emily and Victoria, and William and Harry, and Edward and James, and Tom that died when four years old. No. I had a son Tom, but he died young. I was putting an imaginary case. Suppose Tom writes to me that William’s wife has got a young daughter. I am never sure that this is the first I have heard of the transaction. As far as there being anything remarkable in William’s wife getting a young daughter, the fact does not

help me, for getting a young daughter is quite a commonplace everyday occurrence with William's wife. There, you see, I am at a standstill. I do not like asking William to send me a list of his children, with the dates of birth opposite each name, for it might hurt William to find I had forgotten. And I can't write to Tom, for he is always flying over the globe, and never writes from a place nearer than two thousand miles from the last.

"My plan is then to go to my jeweller and ask him how we stand with regard to mugs and my son William. I find out that about six months ago I sent a mug 'With Grandfather's Love' to William. How on earth am I to make up my mind whether this is a new child or an old one?"

"It would be a moderately safe plan to send a mug to each once a year, or once in two years. Wouldn't that do?"

"My dear sir, I tried the thing one year, and it had a most disastrous effect. I told the man who gets these things for me in Bond Street to send each of my children a mug 'With Grandfather's Love' a few days before

Christmas. I told him all the mugs might be forwarded to Harry's house, as we were all to meet there for the holidays.

"Well, we all met there, and a big party we made, I can tell you. There were a few besides the family. I forget their names, but I think there were four or five people in the house in addition to the family.

"The mugs arrived very late, came over from the neighbouring town and got to Harry's place just at supper-time. Harry ordered all the parcels to be brought in and opened at the table. James, my youngest son, was sitting on my right. When he opened his parcel I saw him grow crimson.

"Then there was a slight tittering, and violent attempts at hiding laughs in coughs.

"All at once someone called out that Miss Someone was ill. I looked to the place they were all staring at, and saw James and someone else carrying a lady out of the room. After awhile James came back and said she was much better, but not quite equal to sitting at table, and would we accept her apologies?

" 'A bad joke, sir. A very bad joke,'

whispered James, as he passed behind my chair.

"That was all I heard then, but next day they told me what I had quite forgotten, that James had never been married; and furthermore, that he was making love to the lady who had fainted at the supper-table.

"James was not able to persuade her that the unfortunate accident arose in the way I have told you. She took offence, and the love-making was broken off."

"And is James still a bachelor?"

"James still a bachelor? Is James still a bachelor? If you will be kind enough to give me your address I'll drop you a line, for really I have got a little confused over family matters of late."

The Vague Man's notions of politics are far from satisfactory :

"I can't say that I am exactly a Liberal, although I vote with the Liberals. You see all my friends are Liberals. My father was a Whig in his day, and I have my doubts as to what he would be if alive now. I get puzzled when I try to think the matter

out. The Whigs of yesterday are the Conservatives of to-day, and the Radicals of to-day are a kind of invention that came in with gas and steam, and all the other comfortable but vulgarising inventions of science.

“In fact Radicals are a scientific invention, or rather are clinkers and ashes from the furnaces of science. I don't think I ought to be a Liberal, for now all Liberals are Radicals, and you see any man following in the footsteps of his father must be, because of that very following, a Conservative.

On the other hand, I am not in favour of melting down all the gold in the country into bullets to shoot our foreign enemies with. I hold that it should be only in our spare time and with our spare coppers we ought to shoot our foreign enemies.

“Then I'm against the honest working-man. I'm dead against the honest working-man, and trades' unions, and strikes, and secretaries, and delegates of trades' unions. It's those infernal trades' unions, sir, that have brought this country so near to be thrown on the great Workhouse Union of Trade. Yes, sir,

this country is almost knocking at the door of the great Workhouse Union of Trade. And the worst of all this is, sir, that the Guardians lately elected by the honest working-man are foreigners, and this country has a very poor chance of getting even a little out-door relief. If, sir, we save up some of that gold we are spending in shooting niggers, for the purpose of hanging the hireling demagogues who are hurling the unfortunate fools of working-men and their country into bankruptcy, I am convinced things would be much better. Is there no treason without a sword? Are not these men betraying their country into the hands of a foreign foe, and do they not deserve the rope? Let us, if you will, treat those miscreants in the way they treated traitors of old: let us decapitate them, and spike a head at the entrance of every chamber of commerce in the country."

The Vague Man's recollection of facts and circumstances is always a source of great confusion to his friends and acquaintances.

"I am not quite sure whether it was in Oxford Street or Regent Street I met

Gladstone last, but I am sure it was in either. He was walking along very quickly with an old green gingham umbrella under his arm—or stay, was it a portfolio of Albert Dürer's engravings? Upon my word, I am not quite certain. At all events, he was walking very quickly. Did I say Oxford Street? It couldn't have been that; it must have been Regent Street, for I was looking at the papyrus painted on the screen of Chatto and Windus, the publishers, when who should come up but Beaconsfield, leaning on the arm of W. H. Smith.

“Strange it seemed to me, as it seems to you, that Gladstone should be leaning on the arm of the Lord High Admiral of the late Government.”

“But who is the Lord High Admiral? I did not know there was anyone of that title now.”

“W. H. Smith was, of course. Don't you know his famous saying? When the late Cabinet was being formed, Gladstone asked Smith what portfolio he'd like, and Smith, by way of a joke, said, ‘Lord! High Admiral,’ the word ‘Lord’ being an exclamation of

Smith's. As you know, Gladstone isn't quick at a joke. So he took the matter seriously, and said, 'Very good, Smith, you shall have it if you like. Give me your references, and I'll look up your character to-morrow——'

"Stay a bit. I've got two capital stories mixed up a little. But never mind.

"Well, as the late Chief-Constructor of the Navy and his lordship came up close to me, I at once saw a red despatch-box under the arm of each. 'There's a Cabinet Council on to-day,' said I to myself, 'and there's Lowe going to it also. I wonder what will Jenkins think of all this; why they have not made even a P.C. of him. I recollect this all so perfectly, for at the moment I happened to look across the street, and saw a placard with 'Canadian Balsam' on it, carried by a sandwich-looking man, who at that moment was passing the Horse Guards, and I remember thinking that 'Canadian Balsam' would not be a bad name for Jenkins. But, excuse me, I must be off. There's Earl de Black, and I want to ask him his opinion as to the colour-blindness of the ancients."

## A COMMERCIAL SMOKING-ROOM.

THE Smoking-Room of the comfortable Commercial Hotel, The Wooden Ingot, in the City, is not very full this evening. The question of the size of the room has just been raised amid a small group who are discussing the probabilities of war and the certainties of whisky. All the company seem deeply interested in the question, and the cumulative opinion is that the Smoking-Room of The Wooden Ingot is thirty feet long by twenty-four feet wide.

"And that, sir," says a tall intelligent-looking man of middle-age, addressing a group of four, "at four shillings per foot is one hundred and forty-four pounds."

"For the fee simple?" demands a man

characterised by the remains of youth, a lean visage, a restless manner, a ready if not wise tongue.

"No, sir," answers the middle-aged statistician, "per annum. Ground-rent, in good positions in the City, reaches on an average four shillings per square foot a year."

There is a general murmur, which seems at once to signify that all the murmurers knew this fact since they learned three-times-three at school, and that they are very proud of the exorbitant rent of land in the City. To feel you have a perfect right to spread yourself over five-and-twenty square feet of ground, worth four shillings a foot per annum, and that the friend who is enjoying a pipe with you is privileged to follow your example, is almost as good as if you could ask him down to your pheasant preserves, or out for a cruise in your two-hundred-ton yacht.

There are three groups in the room, one consists of three men quite close to the door, sitting on part of a hair-covered seat that goes all round the walls. They are all dressed in unbroken black, save for their white shirts. Two are close shaven, the third wears a black

moustache and short black whiskers and beard. Their heads are as close together as their Indian-file manner of sitting will allow. They are cautiously imbibing whisky and cold water. Their complexions are the colour of yellow soap when taken out of water; they wear solemn, not to say dismal expressions, and are evidently discussing business. They may be talking of silks, or jewels, or toys, or "the most laughable game in the world;" but their faces, if photographed, would, merely upon sending *cartes*, ensure them advance engagements as mutes in funerals where the heir-presumptive had decided to inherit the old man's money and have the most dismal thing in mutes that could be got for love or money. These three men never break out from their fastness of reserve. When the general conversation silences theirs, they merely lift their eyes with a weary look of protest and washed-out amiability. In proportion as they become quiet they grow eager. They watch one another as keenly as men with bared elbows and buttonless foils. Each seemed strained to the utmost to honour the intelligence of the other, and to cast it out of the fight. A proposal is

evidently being made to the stoutest, the one nearest the door. He puts his right palm flat on the table, draws his body up and back from his hand as far as it will go, without moving the hand, his sheet-anchor, and abstracts his mind utterly from the place and company. He is evidently back in his own business-place, looking around him and seeing what he could do with the wares offered. His eyes open and shut six times in half as many seconds, he "heaves himself up short to his sheet-anchor," brings his side abreast of it, whispers into the ears of the other two, then collapses as though the effort were too great and the pace killing. The elder man of the two others makes an oval on the table with his finger and a little grog which has been spilt, says a few words into the ear of the third man, draws two diameters to the oval, wipes this work of art or exercise in mathematics out with the side of his fat fist, stands up, and, as he does so, rolls a glass to the floor, where it scatters into splinters under the eyes of all but the three; their eyes are for one another only. Taking the hand of the man nearest the door, he shakes it, and says, "You shall have them."

The three look infinitely relieved, and prepare to go. The seller comes round the end of the table farther from the door, and in doing so crushes the fragments of the glass under his feet.

"Someone has broken a glass," he says aloud abstractedly.

"Yes, sir," says a man of larger frame and genial countenance who is sitting at one of the central tables, "you upset it with your elbow, and it rolled to the ground."

"Ah! So I did," he says, seeing that there are only two glasses left standing on the table. "So I did; thank you. Good afternoon, gentlemen;" and the three are gone.

"War? I don't care how soon we go to war, so long as they get the workmen now on strike to volunteer and give us a chance of getting back our trade once more," says the big man of the genial countenance.

This ingenious though vague suggestion of treatment for the Eastern Question, and cure for the bad business in the West, is greeted with bland smiles and cordial nods. The Commercial Smoking-Room will evidently rally to that cry.

"The working-man has been petted until he has become a plague," says the whilom statistician, in a tone of authority as he stretches himself over a surface the square of which represents at least seven pounds ten shillings per annum rent.

"But," says the man characterised by the remains of youth and the indiscreet tongue, "you can't restore the trade of the country by deporting the population."

The man of genial aspect, who is evidently a friend of the last speaker, lays his hand soothingly on the shoulder of the lean-visaged, as you put your hand on the neck of a restive horse in view of an approaching railway train. There is on the faces of all the others present that sudden alertness and bloodthirsty look to be found among men when someone suddenly cries out, "A rat!"

The statistician is evidently regarded as the strong man of his party, and no sooner has the indiscreet man ceased to speak than all eyes are turned upon the former in mute appeal. He gathers himself up so as to be liable for no more than sixteen shillings rent, twists his legs closely together as if laying

firm hold of his subject, and says : " I tell you what it is, sir ; you can't get anyone who is ill well until you get rid of the disease ; that stands to reason. You won't get a wound to heal as long as there is any proud flesh knocking about in it. And the bloated working-man is the present disease of this country ; he's the proud flesh that must be cut out with the cautery—with the cautery." Evidently he is a little vain of the word and the metaphor.

The indiscreet draws himself together, too, but evidently holds no brief in the case. It is now obvious that he is a rank outsider. " Medicine or surgery and politics or political economy are different things——"

" Thank you ! " waves the statistician towards the speaker, with a look of commiseration and a cloud of tobacco. " And suppose we admit that, what then ? "

The statistician is something of a Will Dry out of " The Spectator." Those around feel that if their champion can give in to such an alarming extent he must have " ambuscados deep."

" Well," continues with some marks of

hesitation the indiscreet, "you cannot get back your trade by casting forth your workmen, but by beating down your own prices and putting yourself in a position to compete with foreign producers."

"Oh! oh! Let me tell you this, sir," cries the statistician hotly, "we employ five hundred hands. Of that number thirty-seven are engaged in manufacturing a certain article. The men know as well as anyone that things never were so dull. Well, six months ago we took an order for the article made by these men. The price was so low that it only kept our works going, and we did not calculate on making a penny. Well, sir, the moment the men knew we had booked the order they demanded more wages. We had to give way to them, and now we are turning out our goods at a loss—at a loss, sir."

"But——" cries the indiscreet.

"Come away," says the man of genial aspect, laying his hand on his friend's shoulder, "you're not a commercial man, you know nothing about the subject, and are only making a fool of yourself."

## THE ACTIVE MAN.

THE Active Man is about forty years of age. He is round rather than stout, full-coloured rather than pale, wears beard and moustaches of dark-brown hair, and has a remarkably white and shiny forehead. There is, so to speak, a twinkle about his legs denoting inextinguishable alacrity. You know he isn't a professional acrobat, but you regret his lower limbs are not the property of someone who could produce unnatural marvels, whereas he gets only natural wonders out of his legs. He can't tie those legs in a black knot round his neck, but he can cover a prodigious length of street pavement with them in a day. His face is radiant, his clothes are radiant, his speech is radiant, but his legs are dazzling. You can

no more be conscious of his presence and insensible to his legs than you can shut up your attention to the cornet in a band of three instruments. As he stands at a corner talking to a friend his legs seem to be on the point of running away from his body, and dashing down the four ways at once. These legs are never for a moment still. He poises on his toes, thrusts the heel of the right foot into the hollow of the left, and then the heel of the left into the hollow of the right. He waggles his knees, juts his hips, turns his toes in, turns his toes out, bends both legs to the left, bends both legs to the right, pats the ground with the ball of the right foot, pats the ground with the ball of the left, and then dances away from his friend as though he were endeavouring to overtake and capture a swallow.

His great theory is that everything in this world can be done by "seeing" someone or other in London. He is willing at a moment's notice to rush from Knightsbridge to Wapping to see some man there who can tell him the difference between a brig and a brigantine, which information he requires to settle a wager of a penny against an orange between two of his casual

acquaintances. He is eager to rush from Tunbridge to Trafalgar Square to see, for the satisfaction of his own curiosity, whether the paws of the lions are turned in or turned down.

He knows where the best of everything is to be got, and will not allow himself to be imposed on by distance. The very best wax matches are to be had at a certain shop in the High Street, Islington, and he never dreams of buying matches anywhere else. The best cigars are to be got at a certain shop in Bond Street, and he never dreams of buying cigars anywhere else. He goes to Thames Street for fish, and to Barnsbury for plants. He would no more entrust the man who makes his trousers with the fitting of his waistcoats than he'd permit the cutter of his coat to do either. He buys his shoes in Regent Street, and his shoelaces in the Euston Road.

He is secretary to a football-club, president of an archery-club, and treasurer of a coal-distributing society. He is executor to four and trustee to six wills. He is a powerful man in electioneering times, for he knows everyone and is universally liked. He can

give you the address of any man much more quickly and quite as accurately as the Post Office Directory. He knows not only the name and address of everyone, but all the letters coming before and after each man's name. Thus, you ask him if he knows where Jones, the Member for Blarney, lives, and he says: "Jones, for Blarney—J. B. L. Henry S. Jones, M.P., P.C., D.C.L., 2803, Barrow-out-of-Furness Lane, W." He can tell you how many children every person of your acquaintance has, and what professions the boys are destined for.

But it is as an interviewer he is most distinguished. He will call on any man, no matter how high his position or how low. If he sees a child knocked down by a cab and carried to the hospital, he will call at the hospital, see the head resident surgeon, call on the head visiting surgeon, call on the secretary of the hospital, call on two of the directors of the hospital, and finally upon the poor woman whose child has been hurt.

He is interested in everything he hears of or sees, and takes an equal interest in all. If a man brings out a new patent medicine, the

Active Man calls on the inventor and has a long talk with him ; is shown over the manufactory, and tastes the new remedy. If it is rumoured So-and-So is going to stand for Chelsea or Marylebone, he looks in upon the man and converses with him, extracts his views, and learns his hopes. If there is a suggestion that a merchant in the City is about to import vegetable marrows from Greece, he calls on the merchant and ascertains the facts—if the vegetable marrows are to be imported by him, in what quantities, and with what design and prospects of a profit. If a newspaper puts forth any mysterious statement, he calls upon the editor and tries to obtain all the information he can.

The result of all this calling is that he is one of the men best informed on current subjects, and consequently one of the most interesting of callers. He is skilful in what he communicates, always taking care that his news is interesting to his hearer. He does not begin with a question, but generally with some piece of intelligence which he knows will be new and surprising to his listener. And still he always carefully steers

clear of anything approaching treachery. Every one he knows is his "friend," and he would not jeopardise the position or happiness of any friend. But then his friends tell him things about other people whom he doesn't know, and about whom he is under no obligation of secrecy when secrecy is not imposed by the communicative friend. He also makes it a rule never to give the name of his informant, and thus his news gets from one place to another with as little savour of personality as appears in the record of a Morse receiving-machine.

The Active Man is a bachelor. He is not long lived. He prefers to burn out rather than rust out, and at forty-three he dies. He is too active to be long ill, and goes out of the great world as quickly as he went about in the great City.

## THE DRAPER'S ASSISTANT.

THE Draper's Assistant is courteous, with a dash of melancholy and a savour of poetry. He is born to the manner of courtesy, and his associations bring him refinement, if not grammar.

His eyes are modestly cast down, his voice tuned low. He is slight of figure, and yet his waistcoat never fits. His coat is dark in hue, and of a cut combining the fashions of many years, and yet belonging absolutely to no definable epoch. He is always warm, and yet his hands are ever red. He never (after breakfast) exercises himself violently, and yet his hair is never quite smooth. He wears a white collar which is never, strictly speaking, dirty. He carries

three miniature pins horrent on the lappet of his coat, and a black string from a button-hole to a pocket of his waist-coat; this string makes no pretensions to be connected with anything particular in his pocket. For aught this string declares, it may be in league with a watch, a love-token, a latch-key, an eye-glass, a pencil. His buttons are fresher than his coat, his eyes are brighter than his complexion, his voice is younger than his port.

The making of sales is the ordeal by which he is hourly tried, and to come forth victorious he has need of nimble penetration and stolid patience. He must be able to pierce the innermost recesses of the customer's desires by the agency of the customer's vague generalities, incorrect nomenclature, and ill-considered ejaculations. He must be capable of entering into subtle calculations between the spoken word and the outward appearance of each customer, so as to be ready to display goods at all resembling the sort required. Some folks say purple when they want blue; others crimson when they want magenta. This customer asks to see some feathers,

and by the exercise of supreme acumen he knows that the spending power of the visitor lies between ninepence and one-and-threepence. Another customer wants some flowers ; and by the same faculty the Draper's Assistant knows that the spending power is limited only on the downward end of the scale, and that he must show nothing cheaper than ten shillings.

Before there is any necessity for his shaving oftener than once a week, he must have acquired more knowledge than could be gained from any encyclopædia of domestic economy and journal of fashion put together. He must know how many yards of ribbon will be required to trim a cap in this style, and how many yards of cashmere will be wanted for a tunic in that. He must be able to tell the size of gloves to fit grandchildren a hundred miles away, even when he has no more *data* to go on than a statement of the relative heights of the children and the counter. He will be expected to know to a nicety what description of shawl a gentleman's housekeeper would like at Christmas, and the exact sort of

dress suitable to the wife of a gentleman's coachman, although the gentleman may forget the complexion and figure of both the women for whom he wishes to buy the presents. He must have his head crammed with all the sumptuary codes of every inch of the island, and be ready to decide the proper number of rows of white for a widow's bonnet during the first twelve months of mourning, as well as the most efficacious colour for a christening.

The resources of his inexhaustible mind must be equally quick to aid the choice of a sealskin mantle and the matching of a faded stocking with a pennyworth of worsted. He must be fit to suggest how all kinds of fabrics and garments miles away may be altered and made to suit, by a gusset of this flannel or a gore of that dimity, such and such a requirement. He must be willing to arbitrate between the fitnesses of two or more materials for a certain purpose, and he must be prepared to give, with an air of welcome, the opinion it has taken him years to mature as to whether orange goes well with black, or the colours in this print are

becoming to a stout housemaid who is keeping company with a young man employed in the gasworks.

His veins must be informed with the quintessence of prudence, his brain saturated in the finest vintage of craft. He must know whom to press and whom to let alone. He must be a supreme judge of people who may be urged into buying by speech, by sight, by silence. He must know how to play his prey as an old fisherman knows how to wear out a salmon. To some he must wholly display the article he thinks will suit, and expatiate on its merits and coincidence with the requirements of the buyer: such is the treatment he adopts towards the lymphatic. With the nervous and imaginative he employs the devices of mystery, of half-concealment, of delay.

It is the business of the juggler to surprise the eye; it is the business of the Draper's Assistant to surprise the heart, to take the heart by storm, to hurry or to steal into its remotest corridors, while its guards are lured away and it deems itself secure against assault or treachery.

Such ability, such an appearance, and such raiment for thirty pounds a year and his maintenance! Gracious heavens, madam and sir, are we not lucky in our day! Ought we not to feel proud when we think that this young man who is trying to sell dress-material to that large vulgar woman, with the odious orange ribbons in her bonnet, could show more wonders to Plato's eyes than ever haunted Plato's wildest dream in the Symposium—for instance, the railway, the electric light, pure Thames river water at London Bridge, the telegraphic machine—and is yet not so expensive as a common fighting soldier in the days when Rome traded in war, and leased out her honour to mercenary hordes! Madam and sir, it's a cheap pennyworth!

Plato and the Romans were all very well in their own day, but they're dead and gone now, and no good ever comes of crying over spilt milk, as the proverb says. Here, instead of Plato and the Romans, is this young man confronted with this mature matron. You look at him, and think there is only one idea in his head, and that is the require-

ments of the vulgar woman. No doubt most of his attention is concentrated on her and her wants, but out beyond her lurks a gloomy unsettled shape—a shape now here, now there, flitting, observant, inquisitive, searching, greedy, portentous, the shadow of Fate. The young man knows the shadow is there, but he must not raise his eyes. He has got his customer, and to her he is bound to give every fraction of his regard.

Upon the Draper's Assistant now lies a supreme necessity: he must sell or perish. The customer is of the lymphatic type.

“That, madam, is the very finest material of the kind made. I assure you, madam, the manufacture of that is so costly it cannot now be made for the money, and I do believe, with all my heart and soul, madam, that you will never again have an opportunity of getting such stuff and such a bargain. The manufacturer was up from Leeds the day before yesterday, and as I was dining with him at the Member of Parliament's Club, says he to me, ‘Have you got any of that black and gold and block and fansash

pattern?' and I says, 'I have;' and he says, 'I'll look in and take up all you have of it; used it for the children at home, for Mabel and Maud, and the missis'—he isn't a bit stuck up—'the missis liked it so much she wants more, and the loom is bursted.' But I'll sell the dress, as he didn't call. Let him suffer the loss."

He has shown her everything in the shelves; this is the only pattern which has won even a glance of interest from her, and behind her flits the shadow of Fate.

"I don't care for the spot. It's like a bile," says the woman critically.

"Not like the red spot! Why, madam, that's accounted the great beauty of the pattern. That's what distinguishes this pattern from the fantail and blue-pouter pattern. The best people don't wear the fantail and blue-pouter pattern, but this is all the fashion now. You go in the parks and see. Nothing else is worn at *soirées* and *bric-à-brac* now."

"No, I don't fancy the spot. It's like buttons on the seat of a tramway-car. I can't fancy the colour of the spots."

“It must be the light. The light of the place is awful to judge colours by. You might as well be in a coal-mine. Why, madam, I assure you that’s the famous anticlimacteric dye that is extracted from the roots of the polyphemus that grows on the banks of the River Nile just before it goes into Pharaoh’s garden, a place now inhabited by no one but crocodiles. I am sure, madam, if you only saw that red in a good light you would like it very much. Look now.”

“When you stand it up that way I can’t bear it at all.”

“Then, madam, believe me there is not the least necessity for your slanting it in that way. You can, if you choose, have it cut, and I have seen many very handsome dresses made this way, with the pattern upside down. If I may cut, say, let me see, fourteen yards, and you make it that way, I guarantee you a dress you’ll like as long as ’twill last, and will wear until your tired of it.”

“Wear a dress upside down !”

“No, no, madam, not a dress. Only the pattern.”

"But how could you wear the pattern upside down and not the dress? No, I won't have it; I can't make my mind up to stand them spots as they are, and as to wearing a dress upside down——"

"Pray, pray, dear lady, let me explain! You don't know how important this is to me. I don't mean a dress upside down, only the——"

"No; I can't fancy it." And she has gone.

He drops his hands on the counter. The shadow of Fate draws near, and he is face-to-face with the Man on the Floor.

"Did you serve that lady?" asks the Man on the Floor.

"No, sir."

"No! and you had her half an hour?"

"Yes, sir."

"You let another customer go unserved to-day and two yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"They will make out your account for you on Saturday, and you can leave then."

"Thank you, sir," says the dismissed man, meekly.

Well, madam or sir, after all, Plato and the mercenaries of Rome have the best of it ; they won't be hungry this day fortnight, and the Draper's Assistant will.

## BY TRAMWAY-CAR.

To treat of all the Tramways in London in one paper would be to do injustice to the subject, and to leave ourselves open to the life-long reproaches of an injured conscience. Therefore, for the present, we shall confine ourselves to the main features of some of the transpontine lines.

London gin, London thieves, London Railway-engines, London beer, London hearses, London vans, London milk, London drays, London omnibuses, London police magistrates may all pass the Thames by bridge, but no Tramway Car. You may cross the Thames at London in a balloon, in a wheelbarrow, in a bad temper, in a frock-coat, in liquor, in poverty, but you cannot get from the Middlesex

to the Surrey shore in a Tramway-Car. In old days, when evil spirits had leisure to terrify the living, instead of modestly giving all their attention to their own personal sufferings in punishment for their own personal sins, it was a doctrine that no evil spirit could cross the water. Although we have lost the unkind attentions of those unreasonable wicked souls, some trace or savour of the superstition may still linger, and the knowledge that a Car can never pass the water—that a Car is, in fact, adjudged in London to be an evil spirit, may explain the expression of extreme spiritual destitution which sits permanently on every conductor of a transpontine Tramway-Car.

The conductors are of various countries and creeds. But all are alike in countenance; all are weighed down and battered flat by their calling. There is about them such an utter forlornness, one cannot help feeling they must have no homes, no families, no past pleasure to look back upon, no future happiness to anticipate. The faces of mutes at a funeral are comic masks compared with the faces of these conductors. They snivel when they take your money, and punch your ticket with

the "alarm-punch, which must be used immediately on payment of fare, and directly in front of the passenger." When they set you down and you hand them back your ticket they say, "Thank you, sir," as though this were the last chance they had of civil treatment by their fellow-men, and they were just going to take off their coats and lie down on a rack. We cannot shake ourselves free of the notion that they sleep in the grassy ridges of a churchyard.

Contrast them with the light, hearty, gaily-clad, and debonair 'bus-conductor—but no; the comparison is too painful. When wicked 'bus-conductors die they are appointed to Tramway-Cars.

One of the most striking features of the transpontine Tramway-Car is that it takes you for twopence "all the way." For twopence you can go a greater distance than the perpendicular height of the loftiest mountain in the world. Inside and outside the fares are alike.

The patrons of a Car are more varied in social degree than any other collection of metropolitan travellers who sit together. On

the railways we have carriages of different classes, and by these a rough process of sorting is effected. Very old women and very timid women dislike, or affect to dislike, tempting the "perilous seas" between London Bridge and Chelsea in a penny steamboat. Women who are very nice, or very delicate, or very careful of their dress, shirk omnibuses. There is in a Tramway-Car little danger of its foundering or blowing up; it is well ventilated and has a passage through the middle wide enough to allow of people going up and down without ruining the double row of skirts, or being accused of picking pockets. Hence, if you can get a Car full at nine o'clock in the morning and at two in the afternoon, the chances are largely in favour of your seeing a very fair sample of the inhabitants of the suburb through which the line passes.

For the busy man of the City—merchant, banker, or clerk—the Car is not of much importance. His time will not allow him to leave his suburban home in the morning and get towards town at no quicker rate of speed than five miles an hour. He is a

season-ticket holder and travels by railway. In the forenoon the Cars are filled with a peculiar class of men. The men do not belong to any great division. They are not wholly business, wholly professional, wholly idle. Very few are in the Directory, still fewer have banking accounts.

This grey-bearded man on the right is a tax-collector who likes things that are cheap ; he has his book on the seat beside him. That man there with the great bald forehead is a schoolmaster whose pupils are now on their holidays ; he is on his way to the British Museum. Here is a visiting governess with her roll of music and a small modest reticule containing her small modest luncheon. This stout florid woman on the left is a washer-woman ; her basket of clothes is on the front platform at the driver's feet. This woman with her three restless, rosy-cheeked children is a solicitor's wife. The party is going into town to-day to be photographed. These two sisters with the pink bows are off to take lessons in Italian from Professor Purnellino, of Newington Butts. That man with the soldering-iron in his hand is a plumber going

leisurely to his work, as is the nature of plumbers.

On the top, the day being fine, are gathered several types of suburban life. Here is a telegraph-boy full of the importance of his office, and systematically condescending towards the millinery light porter, his senior by years. The two boys are discussing the relative advantages of their professions, and although the porter seems to have all the material benefits, the messenger has a suggestive way of twitching his cap or his jacket, as much as to say: "Where's *your* uniform? *You* haven't got a queen for a mistress. I serve the State. You are only the runner for a Mrs. Jones who sells bonnets in a back street. My mistress lives at Buckingham Palace, and has apple-tarts every day for her dinner, and soldiers to walk up and down outside her door to keep anyone like Mrs. Jones or Mrs. Jones's runner away." This hulking man with the scythe and whetstone is one of the great body of suburban mowers who never operate on any patch of grass larger than a billiard-table. This middle-aged man of solemn aspect and care-

fully-coloured nose is the town-traveller for a wholesale brush-house in the Borough ; he is calmly smoking a vile cigar, and luxuriously exposing his shining waistcoat to the pleasant heat of the sun. The red-armed giant smoking the short clay is a dustman. Here is a soldier, and with him a friend in plain clothes ; the civilian is expounding all the points and sights of interest by the way. By a disobliging trick of chance about eight out of nine of the descriptions given by the civilian refer to another line of Tramway, and have as much to do with this as with the Punjab.

Now ascends a pretty young girl fresh from the country. She is followed by her town male cousin, who is very attentive to her, and hands her along inside the railings with that loving touch of lingering care so pleasant to see and so healing to sympathise with. The girl sits down beside the red-armed white-jerkined dustman, the town cousin by the other side of the girl. This arrangement by no means adds to the comfort of the dustman. At first he slews himself round so as to get his back towards her, then he shifts his

pipe from the side of his mouth nearer her to the other side; he removes the pipe altogether; and finally, after a few wriggles, leans all his great bulk forward, slips off his seat, and finds another place at the opposite side of the Car.

Of wet nights a sombre gloom pervades the Car, except when now and then, if we may be permitted the expression, the lurid screams of a baby lend themselves to shatter the morose calm. Old and young are packed as closely as reasoning in "Euclid." Occasionally a weary streaming face looks in at the open door. There is an inhospitable growl of "Full inside" from the travellers, a sad shake of the head from the conductor, and the weather-beaten candidate for a seat either shrinks back into the driving rain or ascends to the windy double bench outside, there to whine against the climate, and cower beneath the thick oilcloth stretching from end to end of the streaming top. Here are a man and his wife who have been spending the evening out. She is carefully wrapped up in a waterproof cloak, and shrinking into the smallest

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possible space to avoid contact with her dripping neighbours. These children have been to Tussaud's, and are talking excitedly. That young woman up in the corner, who looks so pale and is taking no heed whatever of her baby, is—drunk.

## THE COMMUNICATIVE MAN.

THE Communicative Man is about thirty years of age, good-looking, plump, joyous. He is full of spirits and go. He is rapid in speech and movement, and is never silent and motionless at the same time. Even in the hours of sleep he enjoys exciting dreams full of motion and adventure.

His sources of income are unknown. He is never absolutely penniless, although he is always alleging that he is on the highroad to the poorhouse. No one knows anything of his people; he never is more specific in his account of his father than to say that he was "in the Army." His social position is as shadowy as his father's and his income. You meet him in the tag-end of Bohemia and

in a West-End drawing-room now and then. He does not boast of his fine acquaintances in Bohemia nor ignore his knowledge of Grub Street in the West. He will talk of the E.C. to the W. and of the W. to the E.C. with the utmost freedom and the frankest impartiality. He seems always to be in a hurry to get away, and claims the indulgence and the ear of the company on the grounds that he is under the obligation of rushing off somewhere to tell someone something of the highest importance.

His voice although loud is not unpleasant, and there is about him such a buoyancy, brightness, and good-humour that, although most people look on him as a bore, few dislike and none hate him.

He is always well dressed and full of schemes, and of those schemes he talks most. His designs are as varied as the plants and flowers in a hothouse, and about as little able to bear the rigours of our everyday open-air climate.

He rushes in to afternoon tea at his friend, Umber Browne's, at St. John's Wood, and catching the ear of the dozen artists and

artists' wives, Art patrons and Art critics, informs them that :

“I have just dashed down here in a hansom from the City. We came at the rate of forty or fifty miles an hour, for I was bursting to tell you of the way in which I had spent the day. Well, I had an appointment in Lombard Street with my friend Jobblings, a man on the Stock Exchange, worth about three hundred thousand pounds ; that is, he was worth two hundred and fifty thousand when I left, and the Royal Bengal Tiger Monopoly Shares, of which he held an enormous number, were flying up at such a rate that he said he had been making a clear fifty thousand an hour. The Company has been formed for farming out the Capitation allowance for slaughtered tigers in India, and between the value of the skins and the royalty per head allowed by the Government, Jobblings says the original ten-pound shares will be quoted at about one thousand to one thousand five hundred to-morrow. Now, this is too exciting to look at merely. I must get in on the Stock Exchange somehow.” Looking at his watch : “Just fancy, since I began to speak

Jobblings has cleared about three thousand pounds!

"I have a plan of my own. We know that every soldier landed in India costs two hundred pounds. Why not start a Company for supplying India with soldiers at, say, one hundred and eighty pounds per head? The Indian Government daren't refuse to buy in the cheapest market, and we could offer to take all the convicts off the hands of the Home Government and work them up into soldiers for India, provided the Home Government gave us with each convict a lump sum down equal to the capitalised cost of the convict's keep for half the unexpired term of his sentence.

"Thus you see we should save twenty pounds per head for the Indian Government, and take the convicts off the hands of the Home Government at half price, and make a handsome profit into the bargain. We should get finally rid of the worst classes of the community, and no one can say that a convict isn't good enough for jungle fever or sunstroke. I am sure there is a fortune in the idea. I'll see about a capitalist and a

prospectus to-morrow. Good-bye, now. I must run away and see Erasmus Richardson of *The Daily Economist* to get a paragraph about the new company into to-morrow's money article."

He is quite willing to tell a good deal about his private affairs, although by no means can any information beyond what he chooses to give be extracted from him. In a West-End drawing-room he will say to Miss Landcaster :

"Yes, you see, I am by no means what you call a society man. I can't afford to keep an establishment, therefore I am a bachelor, chambers in Jermyn Street are quite good enough for a man of my means. I can't afford to keep even a horse, and if ever you have seen me in the saddle, I was indebted for the mount to the kindness of some friend or a hack stable.

"I often think it is a great pity I did not go in for the Army. I should have made a very respectable soldier. But, you see, at the time I should have gone in, I was thinking of devoting myself to the tea-trade. Yes, I assure you, Miss Landcaster, I had fully

determined to go into the tea-trade. At that time everyone was rushing into the tea-trade. I don't know why, but the fact is so. The younger sons of dukes and the brothers of marquises were crowding in upon the business fearfully.

"You ask me why I stayed out. The truth is that the trade got awfully—if I may use a low but very expressive term—the trade got so fearfully uppish that it would not have anything to do with a plain Mr. It did not care for anything under a Lord Henry or a Lord Edward, and would not look at anything under an Honourable William or the Honourable James. The only connection it was then possible for a simple unvarnished Mr. to obtain with tea was in the retail way, with a white apron, you know, and a lot of mechanics' wives to be served with half-pounds, and addressed as Madam. I drew the line there; and thus, you see, I have no connection with tea down to this day save as a moderate consumer."

In "the beautiful City of Prague" his chief delight is in the ultra-Bohemian quarters. No attic is too dingy for him to climb to, no

coat is too shabby for him to associate with, no member is too wild for his companionship. To Richard Savage Jones he says :

“I am thinking of trying my hand at a play. I think I could construct the plot of a powerful melodrama, but I am sure I could not do the dialogue or the technical management of the sets and scenes. Don't you think that if I struck out the main features in the plot of a melodrama, and submitted it to the manager of some of the big melodrama houses, he would be able to suggest someone likely to assist me with the dialogue and stage knowledge? I place the action in London during the Great Fire. We could blow up a few houses on the stage, and there is no end of stirring incidents to be got out of the time. For instance, the hero discovers that his sweetheart is in one of the houses about to be blown up—the villain, having discovered that this house is to be demolished by gunpowder, has drugged the heroine so that she cannot leave the house. The man has the match to set fire to the train, when the hero falls upon him, knocks the match out of his hand, and explains the situation.

Meanwhile the villain sees from behind what has happened, and that his plot has failed so far, takes up a light, and is about to fire another train, when the curtain drops on the end of the first act. My theory about melodrama is that, so long as you fetch the audience in the first act, you may do what you like in acts two, three, and four. Of course you must have a powerful fifth act.

“My fifth act would be made up mainly of the progress of the hero through the doomed house—the house having the side out towards the audience, so that they could see him as he went along—while the villain on the stage is calculating the progress made by the hero, so that he may reduce the house to ruin just as the hero is about to snatch the inanimate body of the heroine, and fly with her to safety. But the hero overturns the calculations of the villain, and appears at a window above with the girl in his arms, while the villain is blowing the match.

“The hero sees his enemy and the villain sees the hero; the hero is paralysed by horror and cannot move. The villain goes through all the sardonic grins and howls he knows.

Here's where the strong dialogue would come in. Well, in the end they can't come to terms. The hero won't give up the girl, and the girl won't give up the hero. So the villain executes as much of an Indian war-dance as was known in England then, and applies the match to loud and furious music.

"The hero and heroine get all ready for dying, kneel down, etc.

"The villain applies the match to the train, there is a great explosion, a dense cloud of smoke rises between the audience and the scene. The villain is heard to give three terrible yells; fragments of his body are blown among the audience. When the smoke clears away the unexpected catastrophe is explained. The train was not one deliberately laid or in any way connected with the explosives in the house, but was the accidental leakage of a keg of gunpowder which lay near where the villain stood when he applied the match.

"The way I purpose managing the fragments of the villain to be blown among the audience is very simple :

"Just before he applies the match, let a

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dummy figure dressed like the villain and charged with gunpowder be pushed up, unseen by the audience, through a trap-door in the stage. Let the villain be at the time on another trap-door. Let firing of the keg of gunpowder also fire the charge in the dummy figure, and the villain can get down through the trap under the cover of the smoke.

“The hero and heroine then descend to receive the plaudits and bouquets.”

## THE ROUGH.

THE London Rough is one of the most unredeemable blackguards of Europe. He is capable of any ruffianism. He has no code, no moral sense, no social virtues, no religion, no humane instincts. He has a very brief programme for life : it is, Eat and drink all you can get, and destroy all you can't get. When he is not doing mischief to himself by gluttony, or sunk in the sleep following excess, he is doing mischief to the property or person of someone else.

His notion of heaven is anarchy ; of stirring amusement, spoliation. If occasion arose he would give half his carcase for the joy of one hour's pillage. To take by violence the goods of another, and to trample on the

quivering corpse of him he had robbed, would be to him rapture too acute and racking to survive. To be ruthlessly cruel for one hour would compensate him for all the hardships of a long life. When he has money he regards the publican as his only benefactor, and yet, if a tumult arose, nothing would delight him more than to knock in the head of the publican's barrels, and while he lifted the plundered liquor to his lips with one hand with the other fire the house over his only benefactor's head.

He is not a great criminal. Manslaughter is a thing in his way, but he does not seek it. He prefers the outside of a gaol to the inside. When a man is in gaol he is compelled to behave himself well, and behaving himself well is one of the abominations of the Rough. A great criminal cannot be a very uproarious person, for then attention would be directed towards him, and the chances are he should be found out. A great criminal, if he desire to follow his profession unimpeded, must be a respectable man, connected with some religious body if possible. The Rough could endure no such restraints. He has not

expensive tastes like a great criminal. Gin is good enough for him. He would not care for wine. He would rather have gin and liberty than brandy and the restraint imposed on a great criminal by his calling, and brandy is to him the one thing better than gin.

The use to which he puts this liberty is neither the best nor worst for the nation. He does not commit arson, although it is a crime that would delight him above all others, particularly if the building had been before firing stored with a mixture of policemen and clergymen. He does not, on the other hand, make loaves or catch fish. He lounges through life and pilfers whenever he can. He will do anything for money except work. He is as much averse from work as a poet or a Chinese lady.

When he has what he pleases to call "No game on," his chief delight is the public-house. This is to him not only a place of elegant ease and substantial comfort, but it affords him as well a standpoint from which he can study mankind.

His chief interest is in mankind a little drunk, for when mankind is a little drunk it is

most likely to stand the Rough a drink, which is a good and useful thing in its way. Then, when mankind is a little, it is usually on the road to a more advanced state of intoxication ; greater freedom with money, and less regard to its company or the proximity of anyone to its pockets.

He is not married ; but that is not any impediment to his blacking a woman's eye or kicking in a woman's ribs whenever he pleases. He likes a fight now and then, but, like a careful general, he never engages unless the odds are in his favour. Hence he prefers fighting women to men. To him a poker seems a great soother of domestic discomfort ; it will stir up the family fire in the cold weather, and knock down a scolding or protesting woman.

He lives in a room up a slummy lane. He holds no friendly intercourse with any of his fellow-lodgers, unless he has a grievance against any of them, and then he crowds round the statement of his grievance the whole vocabulary of filth.

He looks on his home with loathing, and takes care to be as little in it as possible. The

furniture consists of two wooden chairs, a soap-box, a horrid-looking bundle of something for sleeping on, the poker aforesaid, one iron-pot, one kettle, one fork, one iron spoon, one tin tea-pot, one cup, two saucers, three plates, a toasting-fork, which serves as a roasting-jack and gridiron, and a tin candle-stick. On the chimneypiece there is also a beautifully-coloured pipe, which affects to be meerschaum, but which is porcelain, and is the only article the Rough has to trade in. This is the pipe, he tells you, he has—a look here up and down the street as though he feared the owner might be in earshot—found, and will let you have, as he is hard up, for five bob. So help him, it's worth forty shillings if it's worth a tanner. Look at the amber—(glass, carefully notched by a file to represent teeth marks). Look at the silver mounting! He should never think of parting from it only his wife is on a sick bed, and he has had to sell off everything, and at last he thought of this pipe. Five bob for a real beauty like that, and the satisfaction of knowing you have saved the mother of a large and helpless family from an untimely death. Five

bob. Well, so help him ; but, damn it, give him three bob and a tanner.

His clothes are never gone to the last extremity. They are, as a rule, whole, and free from flaw of serious nature. They are not of any fixed pattern or design. They have been made on chance and sold at a regulation price, but they happen to fit him well, considering his condition of life. They are never wholly clean, they are never wholly foul. They are in a kind of transition age from the tailor to the beggar. They are not spotless, like those of a military or naval pensioner. They are not stained with evidences of toil and conflict with iron and oil, like the artisan's.

With regard to work, he is the gentleman of the corner, for he does none. He has not adopted crime as a regular profession, but as an occasional occupation. He has not taken definitely to violence, but occasionally indulges himself in blows just to keep up his manhood.

The Rough is a native of London, and has never been out of London in all his life. His views are limited, and his ambition does not reach any prospect beyond twenty-four hours.

He would not do without gin to-day that he might drive a coach to-morrow. His mind is stolid and inert. He is incapable of any modulation of voice beyond a war-whoop, a yell of rage, and a whine of cowardice or pain. He has no gentle emotions. He knows as little of what is now understood as love as the poets of Greece. He is a Pagan in his insensibility to any refining process going on around him. He cares less about children than a fashionable flirt of five seasons and narrow means. The woman whom he honours with his favour he also marks with his boots. His father and mother were as he himself, more or less outcasts, more or less outlaws, and wholly depraved. If it takes three generations to convert the blood of a tradesman into blood fit for gentle veins, it takes three generations of decadence to fashion your artisan into a Rough. You cannot make a Rough out of an average man all at once any more than you can make a Darwin out of an anthropoid ape without time. You must give your two generations of artisans who are to be converted into Roughs gin, and more gin and still further quarterns of gin manifold. You must not only give your artisan gin, but you

must add the worst of bad company too. Drink alone won't make a Rough any more than a book of etiquette will make a gentleman. You must bring your artisan into vile contact and vile modes of thought. He must gradually lose all taste for work, for respectable independence, for home-ties, for religious promptings. He must learn to beat his wife and starve his children, and swallow all the money he can lay hands on. He must school himself to laugh at cruelty and enjoy pain in others. He must cast behind him all interest in his country, in his town, and in the general concerns of his street. Then he is fit to be father to the man who in the descending scale will be capable of acting as father to the Rough.

The most peculiar thing about the Rough is that he lives from day to day he knows not how. If the income-tax assessor came to him for particulars of his "chances" for the past three years, and the Rough had the most earnest desire to make an estimate, it would be wholly beyond his power to go back three months, or even three weeks. The money he lives on comes like the

manna, but for the fact that it does not fall from heaven, but rises from heaven's antipodes.

We have heard of converted colliers, converted weavers, converted tinkers, but no one has heard or will ever hear of a converted Rough. He could not be a hypocrite if he would.

## IN A PENNY STEAMBOAT.

THE Old Swan Pier sounds of the country and smells of green leaves. If you close your eyes and repeat the words they conjure up the vision of a broad, slow river flowing through a peaceful plain bounded by remote blue hills. There steals through the soft air of your imagination a tinkling of sheep-bells and a slumberous murmur of a wide undershot mill-wheel. The white swans pause where the bending willows lean over their green reflections in the placid stream. Above the fleecy clouds float upon the pale grey azure sky of summer noon. It is a place in which to read Tennyson rather than Wordsworth; to dream of poetic memories and childish days,

perhaps, rather than to read at all. The Old Swan Pier of your imagination may be in the likeness of this; but the Old Swan Pier, the port of call familiar to the Penny Steamboats of the Thames, is no such nursery for a pastoral. It lies beneath a canopy of London smoke in the E.C. district on the Middlesex shore, fathoms deep below the crypt of the Cathedral of St. Paul.

To the mere average wayfarer the Old Swan Pier is not easy of discovery. It requires both fortitude and perseverance to find it from St. Paul's Churchyard. You have to commit yourself to dubious-looking lanes and passages of cut-throat aspect. In these strait ways lurks a suspicion of murder done or now going forward. Here everything seems to invite the enterprise of bloodshedding. Here are the gloom, the silence, the secrecy, and the certain knowledge that somewhere unknown close at hand runs the river, swift and secure, to swallow up the body of the victim and wash away the history of the deed. Upon emerging from these narrow paths you reach the Old Swan Pier,

and, in the blaze of June sunlight and the invigorating freshness of the river, you shake off your nightmare of dread, reflect that you have known comparatively few people who have fallen beneath the assassin's knife, laugh at your fanciful fears, and, assuming a jaunty air, to compensate yourself for recent depression, move with a swinging gait up to one of the pigeon-holes bearing the invitation, admonition, or command, "Pay Here," and buy a twopenny ticket with the air of one who not only never felt a pang of dread, but would now eagerly volunteer to go in chase of Pimlico pirates or the bushmen of Battersea Park.

Your ticket entitles you to sail by the company's boat from the point of embarkation to Chelsea. You have a few minutes to look about you, as there is no craft alongside bound west. You can, if you please, go into the floating waiting-room out of the hot sun, and take off your hat and wipe your forehead. You can look about you, and, if you feel disposed, walk the deck of the wharf, and ascertain the condition of your sea-legs, before committing yourself to the deep. You may

be reminded of the perils of your approaching voyage by a pressing invitation to purchase a string for your hat ; you may be impressed with the inconveniences and isolation from comforts of civilisation it imposes by a recommendation to secure a box of vesuvian matches.

At last the *Rifleman* appears in sight, and in a few moments ranges alongside. There is a little confusion, a little excitement ; few people disembark, many go on board ; you reach the end of the gangway, scarcely wider than the Mahomedan bridge leading to Paradise ; you touch the deck, and in a moment more are steaming up the Thames. No wail of lament reaches your ears as the steamer is cast off. No weeping wives deplore their departing mates. No handkerchiefs are waved, no hats circle over heads responsive to signals from the shore. No grief is drowned in black quart bottles. All is decorous and dull. There is no exhibition of passion or sentiment. You and your fellow-voyagers are speeding west, yet no gun puffs its white salute, no flag dips in token of amity and goodwill.

Your bosom being unburdened by sorrow

or sympathy with those around, you are free to exercise your observation upon them. In a Penny Steamboat are no invidious distinctions of class, no obtrusion of caste prejudices. You may walk from the windlass for'a'd to the taffrail aft, unhindered by any official, unchecked by any etiquette; you are now under maritime law, and may do all things permitted beneath the flag you fly save two: You must on no account smoke abaft the funnel. You may not speak to the Man at the Wheel. Should you smoke abaft the funnel you are liable to have your pipe put out; but speaking to the Man at the Wheel is an offence so remote from all other situations in life than that of passenger on a Penny Steamboat, we feel ourselves quite unable to speculate as to its consequences with anything like a chance of arriving at the truth. It may be that even so apparently harmless, and at the same time so apposite a question as "How's the wind?" dooms you to hanging at the main yard-arm, and the employment afterwards of your quartered body as bait on the shark-hooks of the ship. We have no clear and authentic account of the fate of anyone

who violated this great law of the after-deck. Evidently the company themselves do not care to face the responsibility attaching to a conviction, for they reduce the chance of the offence being committed by rarely having anything more like a man than a large boy at the wheel. As far as we know, the law does not take any cognisance whatever of such an offence as talking to the Large Boy at the Wheel.

At Blackfriars Pier you add greatly to your living deck-load. It not being a holiday, you are very lucky in shipping that band of Ethiopian serenaders on their way to some open-air gathering at Richmond. We know the faces of this troupe better than the photographs of the Cabinet Ministers. For years we have seen these five faces at every race, regatta, public pageant we have attended. This chuckle-headed knave with the curly head and the bold quick eyes is the bones. We have seen him in his Sunday black coat and his Sunday red hair. This being a week-day, a working-day, he is clad in bright striped calico, and grease and burnt cork,

while his hair looks like an old and faithful blacklead brush out for a holiday. He is not only the bones, but the basso as well, and is known familiarly among the privileged few whom he allows to stand him half-pints of beer, as the Bronze Corkscrew, owing to the facility with which he can screw bronze coin out of simple folk. He is chiefly successful with two classes of people—the bashful young man who shrinks from attention, and the gallant cavalier performing escort duty. About two inches from the ear of the former he clicks his castanets until the man gets red in the face and half mad from the sound and the knowledge that all eyes are fixed upon him; so he buys his release with a penny. Bones attacks the other man by displaying to the maid a row of glittering teeth, around which revolves a panorama of hideous grins, accompanied by a deafening clatter of the bones and a torrent of discordant cries and hisses, until at length the cavalier has to secure the peace and comfort of the maid by purchasing the retirement of the musician. The banjo is the tenor

and ladies' man. His are the seducing thrummings of the melting strings, the smiles in ebony, the wheedling tones of soft entreaty, that win the favour of fair ladies' eyes and cause them to call out to their grim guardians, "Oh, do give that horrid creature something!" There is gallantry in the way he wears his hat, in the carriage of his head. In his tall, slim figure Adonis might find lines to covet and to envy. To the burnt cork and grease which begloom his face is added the deeper depth of the gloom in his melancholy eye. The very slimness of his figure leads you to think he walks forlorn of his own flesh and blood and fat. Although a native of Africa by profession, he seems to have abandoned not only all claim to be considered a Brother, but all hope of being taken for a Man. He receives a coin from you with a smile which appears to say: "I thank you most kindly, sir. This proof of your bounteous heart and kindly sympathy will buy me some most excellent and certain poison."

The decks are now crowded with standing and sitting forms. Three boys and a very old

man of the working class are looking down into the engine-room. Forward are seated the smokers of all denominations. Here is the lank cigarred Yankee, all angles and eyes, staring at everyone and everything as though he had bought the lot and were critically reviewing it to find out if the speculation were likely to prove remunerative. Here is the workman with his clay pipe, his motionless eyes, his basket of tools, and his stolid apathy. A private of dragoons is enjoying his "two-penny smoke," and switching his spotless trousers, his left leg resting on the seat, and left elbow on left knee. By the funnel a horsey man is reading a sporting paper, and, in the shadow of the paddle-box, a woman is nursing her baby. Aft are quadruple lines of passengers, sitting, and many standing, here and there. Here are a bride and bridegroom come up to see London, and do the sights. Here is a young man sitting beside a young woman, perfectly unconscious of the fact that, notwithstanding the presence of about two hundred people, he has put his arm round her waist and has just kissed her ear. Here is the

City man with his black bag, who goes by water "for a blow," and here is—Westminster Bridge, where the boat is fullest. We alight, and wish you a pleasant and safe voyage to Chelsea.

## THE RAILWAY TICKET-COLLECTOR.

THE Railway Ticket-Collector is no longer young, no one could truly describe him as being old, and to say he is middle-aged would be as misleading a description as either. He has the complexion of youth, the figure of middle-life, and the manners of age.

His teeth are sound, his beard is black, his cheeks are ruddy as in youth. His face is full, his figure is full, and his legs are insignificant, as legs always are in middle-age. His motions, his manners, his mind, his very stand are slow, as in old age. He is never grey, he is never slim, he is never active.

He seems incapable of stooping, of running away, of answering quickly ; and yet while you

gaze into the dense blankness of his face you are conscious that he could, if he would, shoot out a terrible blow from his right, or overtake you and trip up your heel and hand you over ready knocked down to the police, if you tried to rush through the company's stiles and cheat the company by not paying the excess fare. But it is only after profound study and careful reflection you come upon the discovery of this latent activity.

The light and careless thinker might imagine that for the feeble, the lean, and the old servants of the company, no more suitable position could be found than that of ticket-collector. The labours are light: a man stands in a gangway and nips your ticket for you as you go down, or takes your ticket from you as you go up. There is little more in the whole of his official act than the waving of a hand as it were. An average Member of Parliament (we mean one out of the five hundred who never seek to relieve their minds in speech) could be taught the whole duty of man considered as a Railway Ticket-Collector in half a day. Mathematics are not essential, and even the use of the

globes may be dispensed with, although an acquaintance with the coloured hemispheres that form the various bull's-eye lights in front of engines is indispensable, as it enables the Collector to call out the destination of the trains as they approach through the darkness. But the feeble, the slender, or the old are never chosen, and we doubt very much if ten first-class Collectors could be got out of what we may call the unspeakable Members of the Lower House.

Look at his face ; examine his expression. The features are immovable and the spirit of the face as inwrought and remote from transient things as the spirit of the face of the Sphinx. In the flesh of the face and in the physical eye there is written a history of years of beer carefully, safely consumed. In the spiritual eye there is a reverie, a remoteness no casual glance can fathom, no hasty words describe. In the mysterious realms of his thought he may be planning the reconquest of Peru, or meditating blandishments for obtaining additional credit at his favourite public-house. You feel that he is amongst us but not one of us. You cannot tell for

certain where his mind is, but you know beyond all room for doubt that his thought is not concerned with that woman who, holding a baby on one arm and a basket on the other, is awaiting, within the line of his sight, the Hammersmith train.

His taciturnity exceeds that of William the Silent or President Grant, although the conditions under which he speaks are the reverse of those under which mighty potentates utter words—he never speaks until he is spoken to. Then his words are of the briefest, and his sentences are constructed wholly without verbs, articles, interjections, or adverbs. You ask when the next train starts for the Palace; he answers, “Four thirty.” You wish to know if the next train leaving this platform is the one for Aldershot. His answer is, “Aldershot, next but one.” His sentences may be called Liebig’s extract of facts. The telegraph companies, grammarians, philologists, orators, and all others who live on mere words would be reduced to a piteous plight if the Collector’s style of language became universal.

It is when confronted with a passenger who comes to the barrier, and there finds he

has lost his ticket, that the Collector exhibits his most amazing characteristics.

The passenger hastily examines all his pockets over and over again, holding his umbrella between his knees and his pocket-book and gloves in his teeth. Through these encumbered teeth the passenger mutters, "I've lost my ticket;" and being nervous and in great dread of arrest upon a charge of intending to defraud, gets red in the face, and stands in momentary expectation of finding the Collector's hand on his shoulder and a cry of "Police!"

The Collector becomes ten thousand times more deeply occupied with his scheme upon Peru or his favourite public-house.

The passenger, having now fully exhausted the various dark continents afforded for exploration by his pockets, is in great perplexity as to how he is to recall the mind of the functionary before him. The passenger being nervous, and timid, and polite, desires to propitiate the man, and cannot find a title by which to address him—he is not a porter, a station-master, or a guard. The passenger does not like to be too bold and say, "Look here!"

or "My man!" or use any other such way of addressing inferior mortals. So he is obliged to fall back upon the former expedient of repeating vaguely into space, "I've lost my ticket." As the unhappy passenger utters these words his previous experience of them is before his mind, and he feels as helpless and much more criminal than if he had to ask a lenient sentence from a deaf magistrate who was about to send him to gaol for petty larceny.

Upon the repetition of the passenger's statement the Collector turns away and walks down the platform, from which all the unfortunate passenger's fellow-travellers have disappeared. The Collector has left the gate over which he presides open, as if inviting the traveller to fly.

Already the passenger sees in the station the look of a prison, and is reflecting on bread-and-water and such luxuries. He puts his gloves, his pocket-book, and his umbrella on the ground, in order to have one fair unincumbered search. Now there is not a soul on the platform, and the lamps seem to be turning blue and about to go out. The loser then be

comes terribly confused, and every moment expects to see two policemen walk up and arrest him for lingering on the company's premises with an illegal intention.

Just then through the gate over which he presides comes the Collector. The passenger feels enormous relief, and picking up umbrella, gloves, and pocket-book, he approaches the barrier. As he does so he opens his pocket-book to get some money to pay his fare, rather than have any dispute or trouble. As he opens the book he finds his ticket in one of the folds. With a pang of relief he hands it to the Collector, saying : "I thought I lost my ticket ; but here it is."

The Collector (who has, to judge by a slight accession of colour, succeeded in extending his credit at his favourite public-house) receives the ticket, looks at it back and front carefully, and having engulfed it in his fat hands, returns without a word to the scheme for the reconquest of Peru.

## THE HOPEFUL MAN.

HE is a man of fifty or fifty-five years of age, stout, clean-shaven, prosperous-looking. He is moderately well supplied with all the goods of earth, among which he numbers an ailing wife and a particularly large and numerous family.

To some men an ailing wife and a large family might appear to interfere with that calm and unbroken smoothness of life in which happiness is supposed to exist, but no such sentiments interfere with his comfort. If anyone says to the Hopeful Man : "I am sorry to hear your wife is not very well." He replies : "Well, you know, she is not *very* well. But then, you know, she is not *very* ill. She *never* is very ill, and that's a great blessing. For her own happiness I am very

sorry she is not in perfect health, but she often says to me that after all, invalids, when they do not suffer much pain, and—and have, well, let us say people and things around them that are not inhospitable to their state, are much better off than those in perfect health, even though the healthy possess similar surroundings. The attention and ministrings and luxuries, devoted to the infirm, go a long way to lessen the weariness of illness, and to develop resignation that amounts almost to happiness.

“Then there is another point to be taken into consideration, a point outside the immediate condition of the invalid, I mean the salutary influence exercised by the patient upon the other members of a household in which someone is ailing. You have such quietness, such harmony, such peace, such rivalry in gentle services and jealousy of consideration. The boys don’t pound on their heels, or fight, or throw coal-hammers down the stairs, or tie the box-iron to the cat. The younger girls avoid quarrels and complainings; the girls more grown up are studious, not to be provoked into hysterics by mice, or the

fancy that burglars are in the house when the poodle barks at the milkman. When the girls practise they restrict themselves to the most familiar, homely, and least exasperating music. You never hear anything of a musical innovation in a house where any grown-up person of mature years is ailing.

“In addition to all this the necessity for patience, and succour, and kindly words, develops the humane faculties of yourself, and you feel lifted up and exhilarated by the consciousness that you have been a humble agent in relieving suffering.

“And then, you see, in my case there is the great consolation of knowing that ailing people are long-lived, and that my wife’s existence is not threatened. The affection from which she suffers never proves fatal. And last of all is the cheering hope founded on the fact that her disease is not incurable, that she may (and I am sure will, under the assiduous care of good doctors and loving care), come back to the enjoyment of her full health and strength once more, and that, too, shortly.”

If anyone imply that a large family is a drawback and obstacle :

“Drawback and obstacle, sir! how can you say such things? Why, look at me. We sit down eighteen to dinner. Eighteen! Do I look the worse of my large family? Do I, sir? What can so inspire a man with courage and confidence so much as the knowledge that many eyes are upon him, particularly, sir, when those eyes are the eyes of his own flesh and blood? What can push a man forward in his career so much as to know that upon his success depends the welfare of several people all dear to him? The man who volunteers to lead a forlorn hope makes the offer out of regard to fame or duty, or the advancement of his fortune; or the gallant soldier may be moved by a generous feeling compounded of any two, or all three of these motives. But the man with a large family has not only the three motives above named, but in addition to them the powerful spur of natural love for those in whose interest he enters upon the struggle.

“Then, my friend, realise if you can, the

delight of watching the dispositions of your offspring unfold, and the keen interest with which you detect here a turn towards piety, which indicates the Church as the fitting sphere for your son ; here a tendency to swim hat-boxes in the tank, which points to the Navy ; here a decided predilection for destroying black beetles with a poker, which leads to the Army ; here a disposition to engage in long and disputatious dialogues with the nursemaid with a view to being allowed to absorb a brother's property, which shows a disposition useful to the Law ! How can a family weigh heavily on a man if it affords him such fascinating studies of character, and means of testing his own powers of prophesying in the human subject the future which a most dear human being is likely to adorn ? ”

If the Hopeful Man cannot take an unfavourable view of any department of his own affairs he is still more intolerantly sanguine over affairs not strictly his own.

You are walking down the Strand with him, and as you come opposite the New Law Courts you ask him what does he think of them.

“What do I think of them! I think of them very well so far as they have gone. I say, Wait until they are finished. We haven’t the whole thing before us yet. It wouldn’t be fair to blindfold a man, lead him into a house, show him the dining-room and kitchen, and ask him to guess the valuation of the house from such data. It would be fair to neither the house nor the valuer. I say, Wait until all is done, finished, and then I’ll tell you what I think of them.

“I know some people say they can’t see the use of that tower, and ask which of our old judges is going to sit up there to hear the appeals from the courts below? Or is it intended for sparrows to build in, as we can’t hope for crows in the middle of London? And some say that the only bird which ought to be allowed to build is the blackcap. But I say all these jesters will be confounded and put to shame when the whole is finished. The notion that everything in Art ought to be of use is absurd.

“Yes, I know that clock looks gimcracky, but what would life be without a few gim-

cracks? Which of us would care to spare our gimcrack acquaintances? Why, they are the most delightful people in the world. If life can't be all skittles and beer, there is no reason why it should be all aloes and sermons. I say for my part, *Vive le gimcrack!* in moderation of course. I don't want all life to be gimcrack. No; but a wise blending of gimcrack, solemn humbug, and solid prosperity is the combination to make life enjoyable, and in the New Law Courts I find enough gimcrack, solemn humbug and evidence of wealth to make them a subject for comfortable contemplation."

The Hopeful Man, confronted with anything which all the world besides regard as a grievance, is not only content, but jubilant.

"You object to London fogs! Good gracious! how strange! Now nothing puts me in such excellent spirits as a London fog. The novel aspect of the street delights me, the gaslight at noon, the gaslight in the clubs and shops and railway stations, and *not* in the street-lamps, give the city such a novel aspect. I love to wander about the town and enjoy the spectacle. Then while we are enjoying the novelty, we know

that the darkness is because of a peculiarity—a most useful and beneficial peculiarity, of the soil upon which this vast metropolis is built, and to which may be attributed the singular healthfulness of the town.”

Your suggestion that fogs may not be in themselves wholesome is met by the protest, “Wholesome! What nonsense! Why look at me! Ever since I can remember I have been in the habit of dashing out into every fog that fell on London, and of staying out *deliberately*, and here I am now, sir, at my age, as sound and as hale as I was when half my years. Do you think if fogs were bad I should be alive and well and hearty to-day? Nonsense, sir, nonsense! Don’t talk to me! If it were in the power of fogs to injure anyone, I should have died a hundred times.

“The Income-tax! You object to the Income-tax! You think it a prying and an oppressive tax! What a strange thing that you should indulge such unjust notions. Why the Income-tax is the flower, the bloom, the essence of all fairness and equity in taxation. Your income is five thousand a year and you pay accordingly. Your income is five hundred

a year and you pay Income-tax accordingly. You earn fifty pounds a year and you pay no Income-tax at all! Can anything be fairer? Can anything be more just?

“The state of the country, sir! Can you allow yourself for a moment to be imposed upon by the miserable pessimists of to-day? The notion is monstrous! Why, sir, the country is simply getting its wind, and when it has got its wind, you will see it rush out again and take the trade of the world captive. Sir, this country is like a man who has had a good dinner, and is only waiting until the useful food has got into his muscles before re-commencing work.”

He takes a cheerful view of even the dissolution of the world, and says: “Well, sir, you know when that comes to pass, the jolly old world will, like a jolly old dog, have had its day, and when all is over, the jolly old world will—will, no doubt, go to a better one.”

## IN LODGINGS.

WE are a merry crew, we London Lodgers. We weekly take berths in our floating homes and ride out the gales securely at anchor. We pay no harbour-dues, no light-dues, no dock-charges, no rates, no tolls, no taxes. We are the supreme darlings of happy Fate. No ghouls in taxmen's robes wait upon our midnight nightmares. If supper play us false, if phantoms attend upon our slumbers and alight upon our chests, they do not take the form of the waterman turning off the supply, the gasman battering the gas-pipe flat, the landlord appearing by deputy in the shape of a sheriff's officer, the taxman with his sledge-hammer to smash in our doors. From week to week we live on and know of no such horrors. We are

not afraid to go down our street lest we should see our furniture on the pavement. The vestry-cart does not remind us of unpaid rates, a gasometer has for us no lurid suggestion of our quarter's bill. The Thames Embankment does not conjure up the memory of unsatisfied claims of the Metropolitan Board. All such liabilities are for us boiled down into one extract, and at the end of each sennight we are presented with just one pill, and desired to swallow it without fear or protest.

We Lodgers are chiefly male. We are of all classes, creeds, nationalities, and sorts. Men of private means, men of little means, private or public; professional men, from generals to acrobats; merchants and clerks, ticket-of-leave men and unconvicted swindlers; Mahomedans, Jews, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, Protestants, Atheists, Greek Church-people; Britons, Japanese, Russians, Moors, Yankees, Germans, Norwegians, French, Egyptians, Maoris; tall, short, stout, thin, bachelors, widowers, old, young, living, dead. You might read for a day all that could be said by way of distinguishing us into classes, and yet some class would be certainly omitted,

owing to pressure of matter. It may be broadly stated that no two of us agree exactly in any one respect save one. The link that binds us all is as universal as our common humanity. Though our foreign brother-lodgers know no other word of English, they know the name of that one link. Though their creeds be as various as the flowers at Kew, they hold the one opinion regarding that link. The golden link binding all Lodgerdom together is the weekly bill: the universal faith regarding this bill is that it is unjustly high.

To the giddy and inexperienced, who dwell at a distance and study the advertisement columns of metropolitan daily papers, London must seem to be a paradise for lodgers. What words of bland invitation! What rich and varied inducements! In the prices asked what marvellous moderation! "A lady would be happy to receive as lodger, a gentleman whose comfort and satisfaction it would be her only earthly consolation to secure." "In a cheerful, religious, musical family, who speak French and Coptic, a gentleman could be accommodated; the lady

of the house carrying at her chatelaine the key giving access to Society. A duke and dowager marchioness guaranteed on alternate days at the family seven-o'clock dinner." "Bed-room, sitting-room, partial board, use of piano, and facilities for acquiring domestic emotions afforded by the presence on the premises of two healthy babies (twins), with attendance, boot-cleaning, latch-key, obliging disposition, use of bath-room and large garden, and permission to keep a bull-terrier or giraffe. Terms—seven shillings and six-pence per week."

Tested by experience, the visions created by these advertisements suffer change. The lady whose sole conception of happiness it is to minister to the wants of a gentleman, lives ten miles from London ; comes up to town every day until she lets her lodgings, and when once the confiding stranger has moved in his luggage she takes her permanent departure to the country, and leaves him in the hands of torpid menials, pining for the swift sympathy and soothing ministrations he had dreamed of at the time of answering the advertisement. When you are once finally committed to the

place where the duke and dowager marchioness dine on alternate days, you find out to your great disappointment that the duke and dowager marchioness don't go with the rooms you have taken, but with a suite which happened, by some perverse coincidence, to be taken by another person the day before you came to terms for yours. You are reluctantly compelled to forego the duke and the dowager marchioness, but are offered as a substitute and set off, a *carte-de-visite* of the duke to put on your chimney-piece, and permission to take the youngest two girls of the family to oratorios, concerts, or operas.

The bed-room and sitting-room for seven-and-sixpence are positively amazing for cheapness. You always had a vague idea that accommodation of such kind and quality could not be got in London for less than a guinea or a guinea and a half. You secure the rooms at once, and order up your heavy boxes from the country. On the fifth day of your occupation the boxes arrive; you unpack them, and congratulate yourself on your wonderful good luck in getting such unprecedentedly cheap and comfortable quarters. On the seventh

day you receive the following original composition by the lady of the house :

	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
To Apartments, one week ... ..	7	6
„ Kitchen Coal, do. ... ..	4	6
„ Use of Cruet, do. ... ..	1	6
„ do. Linen, do. ... ..	3	6
„ One bell knocked off babies' coral- and-bells... ..	1	6
„ Bread, including Bread for Sauce...	8	3½
„ Milk, including a pint kindly ordered by the gentleman for the twins in honour of little Robin cutting his first tooth ... ..	6	9
„ Lard for cooking, one week ...	1	9
„ Coal and Wood for sitting-room fire (Silkstone, best), ... ..	6	3
„ Soap for bath and bedroom, one week	0	10
„ Tea, best Congou, 2 lb. do. ...	6	0
„ Sugar, best lump, 3 lb. do. ...	1	3
„ Rashers and Eggs, do. ...	7	0
„ Butter, best Dorset, 3 lb. do. ...	6	6
„ Watercresses, etc. do. ...	2	7½
„ Use of Prayer Book on Sunday ...	0	1
„ Dinner on do. ... ..	3	6
„ Washing ... ..	8	0
„ Sundries ... ..	2	9½
	<hr/> £4 0 1½ <hr/>	

Lodgings are to be had in houses of almost any class. Noblemen, like houseowners in seaside houses, let their mansions for the

season, for a hundred pounds a week, and artisans let one room to two single gentlemen at four shillings. You can take rooms in Oxford Street, St. Giles's, Cavendish Square, the Temple, Bread Street, Brompton, Brixton, Hackney, Whitechapel. You can get accommodation in the house of a professor of music, where there are four musical instruments in every room, and a strife of three unmusical voices going on from dawn to dark; or you can take up your residence in a family of Quakers, where they do not keep a "singing parlour-maid," or a striking clock. Teachers of declamation will open their doors to you, or you can put up at a religious house where Trappist silence is preserved unbroken for years. The Marble Arch can be secured furnished, and cellars in the Barbican. You can find an asylum with Roman Catholics who won't eat meat on Friday, or with Jews who won't eat of flesh their own butcher has not killed. You can find a home in a family which hold it criminal to be out of bed any night at ten o'clock, or in the bosom of one which count it folly to rise from the card-table before dawn. If you are sociable, you can find people who

will treat you as though you were married to a daughter of the house ; if you are retiring, you can meet with those who will not speak when they meet you on the stairs. If you are timid and honest, you will find the doors of swindlers ready to protect you ; if you are bold and hiding from the law, you may find a haven under a detective's roof.

It is a painful example of popular ignorance to allow that there is any such thing as a typical lodging-house landlady. There is a typical landlady's bill, and the indiscriminating have been betrayed into a confusion between the person and the thing. In our own time we have met such a host of varieties that we are amazed at any human being capable of observation, and having the very slightest experience, allowing for a moment to pass current in his presence any such an assumption as that there is a typical landlady. We have known the widow of an officer who, suffering from heart-disease, was always seized with spasms upon the most delicate suggestion that anything in the house or bill was wrong. We have known the ex-cook, who herself pushed us forcibly into our own room, locked us in, and sent for

her husband to, as she put it appallingly, "skivver our gizzard," because we told her we thought brandy corks never flew out of bottles, as she had alleged. We know the landlady who wheedled us with smiles into not troubling to have the extras put down separately in the bill, and doubled the total from that time forth. We know the landlady who boiled our beef-steak, took all the gravy out of it, gave the soup to her own dear little ones, and then fried it beautifully with onions for our dinner!

But our present landlady and our laundress are "at it" in the hall, and the maid-servant is enjoying the "words" from the head of the stairs; but we can't sit and write a moment longer. The landlady has called the washerwoman "a cat," and the washerwoman has retaliated by speaking to the hall-table of the landlady as "the person who lives downstairs."

## THE DEAR GOOD FELLOW.

THE Dear Good Fellow is thirty years of age, stout, tall, well-favoured, and of independent fortune. He dresses well—not obtrusively—is slightly bald on the top of his head, and carries no cane. His shirt is always the perfection of neatness. He does not swear, or smoke, or use perfume. He never drinks more than a glass of wine at a time, and prefers water to wine. He is never in love with one woman more than another. He never hates a man. Personally he doesn't dislike the cold of winter, but if it hurts a friend of his he whines over it rather than abuses it. All his acquaintances are his friends. He would do anything in his power for the companions of his youth; he would do quite as much for the

man he met for the first time at a ball or a club last night.

There is nothing he does not love and sympathise with. Every person or thing that suffers is "poor fellow" or "poor thing." He is a perfect exquisite in humanity. He does not like to see a rose-tree pruned, for he fears the poor thing is quite as much hurt as a terrier when its ears are cut. He does not care to see a child punished ever so slightly; children are so awfully sensitive, you know. He would like to take off his coat and put it under the knees of a horse down on the pavement—horses' knees are so tender. If the whole nation would only vote for the abolition of butchers, and make it illegal to eat flesh meat, he would be delighted to forego his own slice of beef and his lamb-cutlets. He thinks capital punishment a greater crime than murder. He would rather England lost every foreign possession she has than that she should draw the sword.

Of course he has not given himself the title he bears. He has been designated a Dear Good Fellow by those with whom he associates. He is always ready and willing to jump into a

cab and go anywhere, do anything for you. He has nothing to do for himself, and rather despises his own affairs. He is miserable unless he is executing a commission for someone. He will with pleasure post a letter for the cook, carry the ladies' pug, and engage a box at the opera.

He rises early and spends the unfashionable hours of the morning in out-of-the-way places. If a friend is sick he will sit up with him and read to him anything, from blue-books to Shakespeare. He will travel inside a drag, that the owner may take up a distant acquaintance who has dropped in unexpectedly. At dinner he has no favourite dish, no favourite wines. Although he does not smoke he has no objection to others smoking. He will sit in draughts, and at billiards offer his cue to anyone dissatisfied with his own. At chess he gives back moves, and does not insist on strict play save with regard to himself. At cards he never challenges a revoke. He has no ill-natured stories of anyone, never borrows money, and never asks for money he has lent.

He is most popular with very young men

and old ladies. Men of thirty do not court his society, and women who are in the activities of life think him awfully good and kind, but—— They don't know how to finish the sentence. They cannot find any name for what they miss in him. If there were a little shadow whatever in his history he would be positively charming. If he could only be reproached with swindling a tailor or flirting with a married woman for a week, there would be an object-point in the story of his life. But there are no shadows in his career ; he was exemplary conduct personified. He was too virtuous and too good-natured to cause trouble to his friends, and it is society's troublesome children that society loves most.

He is the Good Samaritan of pin-pricks, not of dagger-wounds ; and sometimes people like to bind up their little wounds in secret and without noise.

## THE BUSYBODY.

THE Busybody is a man of about fifty-five years of age, thin, wiry, grey, restless, ardent, irrepressible. He is a widower, and all his children are provided for, so he is free as air, and, not being much tied down to any occupation, he places himself wholly at the disposal of not only his friends, but of those also whom he may meet for the first time in street or train, or park or steamboat.

He is always neatly dressed, and wears shirts of great extent and purity. He is an early riser, and in winter and summer takes a walk before breakfast. He knows a little of everything and not much of anything. He can talk on any subject for ten minutes, and the moment he finds himself getting out of his

depth, or that his stock of knowledge has been satisfactorily displayed, he discovers he has urgent business in some other direction, leaves abruptly, and rushes off in the utmost haste.

“My dear Cresswell, now what are you going to do with that eldest boy of yours? I mean the pale-faced lad with the slightly hydrocephalitic head. You know he is not in the least fitted for the Church. The course would drive him mad, or he would retain his intellect just long enough to take orders, then leave the Church and turn Shaker or Mormon, or something else. That, you will admit, would be a thorn in your side all your days. Now, if *I* might make bold to speak, I’d tell you what I’d say. I’d say, Put that boy into a stock-jobber’s office, and, as soon as he knows the routine, start him as a speculator. That’s the thing for him. It’s only the clever ones that ruin themselves on the Stock Exchange. The nearer anyone is to having no intellect at all, the better for that business. Good-day.”

“So you’ve done thousands and thousands of yards of flagging in your life, and think

you ought to know. Well, if you really have done thousands of yards of flagging, you ought to know. But then it seems to me that in the present case you don't know. Now if you were to ask me my advice, I'd tell you what it is. You don't want my advice and you think you know your own business ! I hope you do. But did you never hear the saying, that 'Two heads are better than one ?' Now what I say about that flag is that it would be much better for you to try and find a closer fit for the hole than that flag. Why, you will have to take off quite half an inch of stone, and as you know London is as heavily taxed as she can bear, I think you ought to waste none of the vestry property. My dear friend, never be above taking advice, when the advice is the result of years and experience."

"I am very sorry to hear that you lost that money, McIntosh, in that bank. Very sorry indeed. Now, if I were you I'd see what I could do in the way of retrenching at home. You have a very heavy family. You're not so young as you used to be, and even the youngest is liable to be cut down. No man in your position can afford to lose

such a sum of money and keep up an establishment like yours. I'd advise you to sell the carriages and horses at once, discharge all but two of the servants, and get a cheaper house in the neighbourhood of Hackney, where you would not meet any of your old associates, and where you would suffer no pain from your old friends observing your altered circumstances. That's what I'd recommend. Remember me to all at home."

"My dear Chestmair, can what I hear be true? They are saying most uncomfortable things about your domestic happiness. I do not wish to intrude between man and wife. I know no good ever comes of it. But then, if what they say is true, some friend of yours ought to step in and save you from ruin. I know, my dear fellow, your kind, forgiving nature. But there *are* limits to all things, and I must say that I do not in the least approve of your trying to hush up matters. Have it out, my dear Chestmair, have it out in court, and then the world will be satisfied whether you are right or you are wrong. Yes, I know what you say. She went to Brighton for a few days with a brother just

back from India. Of course, what else would you say if you wish to keep your family in ignorance? But, if you want to vindicate your honour, prosecute someone for saying it was *not* her brother. Prosecute someone for libel. My dear fellow, I am quite at your service. If I can be of any use in this sad affair, prosecute *me*."

"My dear madam, allow me to suggest to you that this is a most wasteful manner of cooking mutton. Mutton should never be served so. Indeed, you lose all the gravy and most of the flavour by doing it in this way. If you allow me to see the cook for a few moments I can give such hints as will prevent a recurrence of this waste. When you think, dear madam, of all the poor families that have no gravy, and of all the well-off people who have no flavour, I am sure you will admit that gravy and flavour should on no account be allowed to go to waste. Then again, so few people have taken the pains to master the principle upon which the success of sweet omelet rests. I am not as young as I was. When I was younger I used to be able to swallow almost anything, but we grow

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wiser as we progress in years; and now I would not dream of touching a sweet omelet unless prepared in the manner I speak of. I shall communicate my plan to your cook."

There is only one way of escaping a Busybody when he has made your acquaintance. Kill him, and get hanged for his murder; this is much better than a life of penal servitude to him.

## IN THE SUBURBS.

OUR Suburbs are at the south side of the Thames. They are a happy blending of the S.W. and S.E., and lie about four miles from the General Post Office and Whitehall. There is no splendour about them, and we don't think if you looked into every house within a radius of two thousand yards from our parish church you'd be able to find a coronet on any chimney-piece. We are chiefly City people, and intelligent enough not to cry for moons or coronets. We are quiet-going and eminently respectable. We are all personally profoundly peaceful and prodigiously dull. We never go out into the shady lanes or upon the verdurous grassy slopes and have a calm and refreshing fight, such as falls to

the luck of our fellow-Londoners living in St. Giles's or the Dials; and we never go to the royal drawing-rooms or as guests to Goodwood. We are shop-keepers by calling and shepherds in taste. We consider ourselves to be very Parisians for our daily intercourse with the City, and yet arcadian pastors for our four miles' distance from Bow Church. We seem to have for next-door neighbour on the right, the Lord Mayor of London in his gilded coach; for next-door neighbour on the left, an Alderney heifer on her daïs of golden buttercups. In our grove there are legends of the nightingale, and when we listen we catch the booming of Big Ben.

The houses in our Suburbs let for widely varying rents. You can tell the rent of any idle house advertised by the description in the advertisement. "A comfortable six-room house" is twenty-eight pound a year; "A commodious house" is seventy; "A family residence" is a hundred; and "A desirable residence" is one hundred and fifty. The comfortable six-room houses are chiefly in streets or roads of a hideously monotonous character; all the houses are the same size

and pattern. At every ten paces you find a child of three laboriously falling down the steps that lead to the narrow doorway from which a group of larger children are furiously endeavouring to emancipate a secondhand perambulator, while a bedraggled mother in the background is double-hitching a hat-string under the chin of a purple and screaming girl of five. These houses are occupied by the better classes of artisans and clerks.

The seventy-pound house is on a road, with trees at the end of the front garden. It is semi-detached. The front is very bright and painfully clean. Everything is fresh and wholesome about it, from the old lady, the grandmother, being helped out of the Bath-chair, to the young girl tripping down the steps with a music-case under her arm, and on her cheeks a pair of red roses which need not be afraid of comparison with any "in the garden of girls" away in Cumberland where her cousins live. In one of the drawing-room windows is an ornamental china flower-pot, with no flowers; in the other window a paroquet. Really the seventy-pound house does not pretend to be a house at all. It affects the airs of a villa and

a debonair manner. It avoids pretensions of any kind, and opens its door to you with an apologetic smile, as who should say : " This is only a sylvan haunt, not a downright serious residence. Pan does not come here as often as of old, but sometimes he looks in. Will you take cider or champagne ? *Massepains blancs ou roses vanillés* with champagne, or oat-cake, clotted milk, and cider ? We like the clotted milk and cider—in the country here." Our seventy-pound house has, as we said before, no pretensions, but is a slave to one affectation : it assumes to be about ten miles farther from Covent Garden than it really is. It takes more personal interest in its back-garden than any other class of house. The gardens of our twenty-eight pounders are an abominable combination of a play-ground and a bleach-green. Our hundred and hundred-and-fifties are too stately to tuck up their sleeves and hoe and rake. But our seventy has a good-sized back-garden, and does its best to exhaust the soil. There is a bit of every green thing that grows in it. Its pride and joy in its beans, peas, potatoes (twenty-five), parsley, mint, onions, is most engaging. When it sits down to tea and urges

a favourite radish on a guest, there seems to be a lingering hope that all the root may not disappear at one fell swoop. It looks at it as a careful housekeeper does at a thirteen-pound leg of mutton: There is a lingering regret in parting finally from the root, as though the donor saw how with care it might serve for to-night's tea, be sent up cold to-morrow, and come in as a hash the day after. Those who live in our seventy-pound houses are chiefly professional men of moderate incomes, managers of business firms, and the better end of the vast class vaguely known as Officials.

About our hundred-pound houses there is an air of reserve, an atmosphere of respectability damping and depressing. Contrary to the former class, they affect to be essentially town residences. They hope to be taken for dwellings a mile nearer to Pall Mall than they really are. Those of them that are in the S.E. district affect ignorance of geography, and make believe to be in the S.W. But this is their only delusion. In everything else they are cruelly matter of fact. In appearance they are offensively substantial. Everything in

them and about them is ponderously solid. They suggest the idea that from garret to basement they are all dining-room. They look as though no butcher, or baker, or milkman, or grocer could ever dream of pressing for the settlement of bills, because of any doubt of the house's solvency. They seem to be the result of attempts on the builder's part to give practical effect to the proposition that an Englishman's house is his castle. The porticos are sunken so that the besieged may greet the besieger with molten lead or boiling oil, should temerity tempt the latter to venture up the whitened steps. Their bay-windows are flanking towers defending the main approach. No fresh-coloured maid in lilac-print dress and kiss-me-quick cap opens the front door, but a man of dubious calling and composite garb. You are in doubt whether he is the master or the footman in a walking-suit, or the gardener in his Sunday clothes. There are no children ever about your hundred-pound houses, no dogs, no cats, no birds in the back-gardens. They subscribe largely to foreign missions and take in *The*

*Times.* They are rented by retired merchants, junior partners in the City, and superannuated members of some of the foreign services.

Our hundred-and-fifty-pound houses are straightforward and candid. They affect to be neither farther off nor nigher town than they really are. They have stabling for three horses and a coach-house. They are over-run with dogs and cats and birds and children, and all other kinds of humanising pets. The blinds are pulled up or down as the people inside wish, without regard to what anyone outside may think. There is about our hundred-and-fifty-pound houses an air of success, and the people who have got on well in the world and don't care to hide their satisfaction with the world and their position in it.

But our Suburbs are not wholly composed of private houses. Here and there are patches of shops, and in its very centre stands the great mart known to us all, and loved of all women, the Bon Marché. The Bon Marché is our own private and particular Regent Street and Oxford Street in one, where women can get everything in season and out of season at reasonable prices. On the footway in front

of it every afternoon is held a field-day of women; those who do not enter it move up and down in an everlasting march past. The march is always executed at the "slow," the perambulators serving as siege-train, ambulance, and artillery. We have our grocers, and our butchers, and our oil-and-colour men, and our plumbers, and our tobacconists, and our confectioners, and our other hundreds of tradesmen, all begging for just one trial, and frantically inviting comparison between their prices and London prices, as though London were the distant Utopia of purchasers. Then we have "Our Special Artist," who does portraits of Gambetta and Victor Hugo, to give tone to his collection, and descends to marine views in order, as he puts it with British simplicity, "to get a living." His works are daily on view against a wall on the main-road of our suburb, where you can see them and select such as your taste may approve at the moderate charge of sixpence each all round. We are not in a position to make any statement to the effect, but we have no doubt he is prepared to offer his pictures on better terms to the trade. The works

are not framed or glazed, but are carefully done on panel obtained from the bottom and sides of well-seasoned band-boxes. The artist follows Turner's plan and Ruskin's advice, of sticking to black, blue, and white, for a considerable time, the paintings under notice being executed with much spirit in the blacking and the ball-blue of commerce.

Walking through the shady lanes in the twilight, you come upon two stout undersized men, struggling along with a long dark mysterious-looking burden. You draw aside to watch and listen, your mind full of some awful story of unaccountable disappearance of a man known to have had a thousand pounds in Bank of England notes in his possession at the time. You crane your neck and get yourself ready for crying "Police!" and "Murder!" when one of the two speaks: "Only for that leg before wicket they'd never have done it." You collapse. Yes, we play a great deal of cricket in our Suburbs, and in the gloom you may meet pair after pair bearing home long black bags incidental to the game.

But if we are strong in cricket, we are

positively antediluvians for might in velocipedes. When two thousand years hence they dig down into our stratum of dust in our Suburbs, the antiquarian conducting the investigations will commence his report with the words, "About two thousand years ago this region seems to have been completely peopled by velocipedes." A thorough-bred descendant of Sir Boyle Roche's bird would not have a chance against these velocipedes in a contest in ubiquity. There is no respite from the tinkle of their bells. There is no sanctuary from the pursuit of their wheels. Locusts were never thicker in Egypt's worst days. Bull-frogs never saluted the moon with more persistent and discordant noises. The good people of our Suburbs live in the belief that when they die they will go to some place from which velocipedes are excluded.

## THE LITERARY GENIUS.

THE Literary Genius was not apprenticed to his present business. He has not been through the arid drudgery of a newspaper office. He has vaulted from outside the ring into the charmed circle without the trouble of squeezing himself through the wicket or showing his pass. He did not come to his work young; but when almost half through life suddenly he was violently seized by the idea that he possessed an inexhaustible fund of unworked originality which could be best used for the benefit of mankind in the form of composition.

Accordingly, a rage for appearing in print entered into his blood, and drove him headlong into a career for which his natural aptitude

was nothing. A few of his "poems" on local subjects got into the weakest of the papers in his native town. Then a short story of his was accepted by *The Gentleman's Primer*, which acts on the prudent and selfish principle of accepting all contributions on the voluntary system.

This turned his head, and he resolved to adopt literature as a profession. He gave up his humble situation in his own town, and came up to London full of glowing hopes and bright anticipations. He had ideas of writing an epic as soon as he had gained a substantial base of operation. He called at the office of *The Gentleman's Primer*. The editor was delighted to see him, took his address and promised to write to him in case his services were required, but explained that at present they were not prepared to make any addition to the staff.

He has had many experiences of other offices since, and although he is now upwards of fifty, he has not yet set about his great epic. But he has talked of it, and none of his acquaintances are in the least doubt as to the merits of that latent poem on the date

of its publication. The great work is to be the Building of the Ark, with treatment different and better than any other treatment of the same subject. Whenever you meet him he tells you that he has just been to "my publisher," and that he has got very flattering promises and a most satisfactory agreement for the poem. He is now about to commence the writing. He is still quite young enough, and the time spent in preparation has been wisely spent. If you are new to him you ask him who his publisher is. He is not at liberty to tell, as it is desirable that the first intimation that he is engaged upon the great work should come from the publishers themselves.

You are interested, and express your delight that his arrangement with the publisher is so satisfactory. Yes, he is to get five thousand for the epic, which will take him a year to write. True, the pay is no more than that given to an ordinary puisne judge; but then the fame will outlast the statute law of England, and the book will be one of the archives of the English language when the language is dead.

The Literary Genius lives—but how, very few know. He alludes vaguely to “my rooms,” but none of his acquaintance knows where these rooms are. He is believed to be very poor, and has about him a kind of foolish pride that makes him loved, for all his powers to lie and bore. The human vanity of his lordly speech, of his rooms, and his publisher, and his five thousand pounds, destroy the evil done by his unwritten poem. His coat is poor, but his ambition is noble. He cherishes a delusion, but as he is unwedded, and has no one depending on him, his delusion hurts no one, and is on the side of all that is devulgarising. While he holds his head high, and talks of not inviting comparison with Milton, or Homer, or Dante, he earns the few shillings required for his daily needs by writing, now and then, when he is permitted, the history of some rare fat giant or goblin grim for a child’s magazine.

## WITH THE DISCIPLES OF ART.

IN certain sections of better-class London an acquaintance with Art matters is deemed as essential as bread. If the full truth were told, the knowledge of Art is more important than the necessities of life; for if you don't know anything about Art you are out of the fashion, and if you have no bread you die; and the proverb has it that "'Tis better be dead than out of the fashion."

The classes which most affect Art are not the very highest. The very highest are, as a rule, content to pay someone for doing their Art for them. But the upper and middle sections of certain denominations of the middle classes are, as it were, saturated and drunk on Art. Absolute knowledge is

not even expected, but apparent knowledge is indispensable. In the narrow Art sects of which we are now speaking, it is quite enough to know the slang of Art and to possess some distinct personal peculiarity. This Art-sense is not confined to pictures or sculpture; it is not limited by anything at all, nor does it stop short of anything. It governs the pattern of the pantiles and the design of the basement hearthstone. Its disciples pass away their lives not so much in an elegant amusement as in a long and wearing conflict with their own consciousness of their incompetency and liability to disaster. When this nation was busy with conquest, colonisation, and manufacture, it had little time to turn aside into the lazy paths of Art. For many years back England has been triumphant, extended abroad, and rich; of late she has turned her attention to Art, and, in accordance with the infrangible rule of nature, she has leaped from indifference into scrupulosity.

Our grandfathers built houses because they wanted houses to eat and sleep in, and if the builder was good enough to throw in

Art they did not object much so long as the Art did not swell the supplementary estimates or cramp the dining-room or stables. All this is now changed. The early Christians sacrificed comfort and convenience to the demands of the souls; the modern followers of Art sacrifice their comfort to effect. Our grandfathers allowed artisans to design the decorations for their houses; in our days we would like the plans of a R.A., and could by no inducement sink below an associate. Even the dullest now know something about Art. The very young men about town can talk about it. If they have no idea of how a coal-scuttle should be designed, they have at least a theory about colour in stockings. When any intellectual brain-wave reaches the young men about town, it may be taken as a sign of high-water and spring-tide. No intellectual movement can ever penetrate farther into mankind. The young man about town is the impassable barrier of progress. His slang and billiard-table scepticism ruin enthusiasm. In all the history of the old Hebrews, the most gifted race of antiquity, we hear no mention of one single young

man about town. Just one such would have been enough to scotch the onward rolling wheel of Judaic religious earnestness.

Mrs. Smith is one of the most enthusiastic of Art Disciples. She is the wife of Mr. Smith, who owns a compact little property in Devon. Wife and husband are both under the medium height, both round-cheeked and well-favoured. They are childless and passionately devoted to Art. They live in a two-hundred-pound house in Brompton, and rarely visit their seat in Devon. As soon as the London season is over they fly south in search of Art marvels.

This is Mrs. Smith's "at home." She is to be found in her reception-room on Fridays from four to six. On those days and between those hours she and Mr. Smith are charged to the brim with Art. The chances are that, but for these safety-valve Fridays, the amiable couple would explode. To pass a Friday afternoon in London without saying about forty times : "What a charming passage of colour !" "What a delightful dying fall in harmony !" would be by them regarded as dreariest of exiles from essential sympathies.

The reception-room is all sage-green and grey. Mrs. Smith exults in the fact that there isn't a speck of positive colour in the whole room. The ceiling is a muddy buff, the walls a dingy olive, the carpet a faded brown. The chairs are of some light yellow wood, the colour of the ceiling. The small tables scattered round the room are of satinwood and walnut. There is no gasalier or brackets for candles. The ceiling is quite plain save a narrow Greek border of a double dye of dingy buff. All is supposed to be in "perfect keeping." All is believed to be in "soothing harmony." Coleridge said you couldn't, with advantage to the text, alter a word in Shakespeare; Sir Charles Hueson said you could not place as much as a strawberry on Smith's drawing-room table without utterly upsetting the balance of colour. Sir Charles is the greatest amateur Art-critic of modern times. Since Sir Charles became a convert to Art he has been heard to declare that nothing could ever induce him to hunt again, lest if he got a bad fall he might be compelled to die on a great plain of unsubdued green grass. Death under any circumstances would be unpleasant

but the idea of dying on a field of unsubdued green grass was too barbarous for such an age of refinement and sense as this.

At one of her receptions, Mrs. Smith fainted, and had to be carried out of the room. The cause of that distressing circumstance afterwards became known to the lady's nearest friends. The case was peculiarly distressing and affecting. It must be known that Mrs. Smith's room was specially constructed with an abhorrence to the colour red. It could endure orange or drab (it was particularly tolerant of faded drabs) or even blue; but any degree of red was fatal. Pink, scarlet, crimson, were simply not to be thought of. Even violet was dangerous, and, Art disciples declared, made the rest of the room uneasy, "marred the concord of sweet tertiaries," as Sir Charles neatly put it. Well, a brother of Mr. Smith married a daughter of Grantham Omnis, member for South West Rutlandshire. In due time, Mrs. Smith called upon the bride and the bride called upon Mrs. Smith. The bride came to "a Friday" in order to be introduced. Taken in front the bride's costume was irreproachable.

Her lips, which were full and ripe and red, such as the average bridegroom loves to know and feel are his, were a slight source of trouble to the room. But then the room could stand that ; but, oh heavens ! when the bride turned her back, a mass of fierce positive red slashing, enough to disorganise twenty such rooms ! This was too much ; the hostess uttered an hysterical cry, and sank to the ground in a faint. As Sir Charles afterwards said : " You might as well show a wild bull a red cloth and expect mercy, as show that room a dress slashed down the back with red and expect to survive." The outrage was greatly spoken of at the time, and it was a full month before the room recovered.

It is Friday afternoon in the season, and upwards of a hundred visitors in all will come and see Mrs. and Mr. Smith. The owner of the house is a most modest and retiring man, and no doubt would never have created a ripple on the surface of the Dead Sea of Society, only that he one time bought pictures as a High-Art collector, and found himself, after a little while, cheated and imposed upon to a very serious extent. So grave was the

sense of humiliation under which he suffered, that he found it necessary to start a Fine-Art theory to justify the blunder of the past. He was not wholly destitute of intelligence, and having observed that a paradox is much safer than a proverb, he commenced his career as a disciple of Art with two fascinating paradoxes, namely: 1. That there is really no such thing as colour; and 2. That form is only the expression of degrees of colour. He is now busy with that old becurled dowager in the corner. The bloom has long since fled from her cheeks, and she loves to come and hear dear Mr. Smith and his delightful High-Art theories about colour being really not colour at all, and all the other delightful things.

Talking to Mrs. Smith is a broad-shouldered brown-faced man of thirty-five. She is sitting in a kind of mute rapture listening to him. He has discovered a jug. He found it in a most dreadful place, a pawn-office. It was for sale, and he bought it for ninepence.

"Ninepence!" she exclaims, with a little scream.

"Yes, ninepence, and a most lovely glaze."

"Oh, do tell me about the glaze."

"Well, it's not so much the glaze as the beautiful colour. A kind of deep dark violet-blue, with a blush of green wandering under the transparent flaws——"

"Wonderful!"

"And in the inner depths, the profounder deeps of the opal flaws, that long-looked-for glorious glow of minute red-black."

"Oh!" The description is too much, and Mrs. Smith slides off her chair to tell her husband that Mr. Hardglass has found a wonderful jug with the long-looked-for glorious glow of minute red-black under the opal flaws of a blue glaze.

Here is Mr. Isaac Jordeans, the painter of erratic landscape; he doesn't pride himself on the fact, but smiles a superior smile when anyone asks him the meaning of his pictures. He says they are symbolical, and if you haven't the natural key to them he might as well try to make the Apocalypse simple to you.

To the right of the painter is one of our sweetest poets. His songs are all set in a minor key, and he may be said to be the laureate of the sage-green period of English art. He is continually in one of two diffi-

culties : he is either in some doubt as to how he will have his portrait taken next time, or as to whether he has yet put down in words exactly the relations which he would like to exist between himself and heaven.

The Smiths are new people, and everyone in town is not here to-day ; but there is a good sprinkling of those who take an interest in what may be called the art of melancholic domestic adornment. They do not all understand the meanings of the words they use. But then Art is like chess—it affords equal delight to the tyro and the adept.

## THE CITY MAN.

THE City Man is no longer young, and yet shows no signs of age. He is somewhere about fifty years of age, clean-shaven, round-faced, solemn, dull. He weighs fourteen stone; is a staunch Conservative, and hates claret.

He has a large family and a large wife. Everything about him is on an extensive scale. His waistcoat, his watch-chain, his watch, his forehead, his charities are all large. He is the most taciturn man in Europe; a policeman in the presence of a street disturbance is comparatively loquacious.

He is as regular in his habits as a chronometer, and as precise as an architect's plan. He has no sense of poetry, but shows a sense of poetic honour in his dealings. He is a practical patriot, although no one has ever yet

heard him cheer. He doesn't want to fight, he is too old and too fat for arms, but, by Jingo ! if you do, and the cause is a good one, you may draw on him for all you want in the way of money.

Personally he is unostentatious, although he keeps up a splendid establishment at Denmark Hill, and enjoys an income greater than many a belted earl.

He wears a black frock coat, a silk hat, and a white shirt. He likes a loose collar and a roomy boot. He never carries a cane or stick, and employs a cab as seldom as possible.

He never makes a hasty reply or loses his temper. By nature he is placid and elephantine in his mental movements, by experience he has acquired caution, and by habit he has come to consider his words as carefully as his banking account.

He and the soldier and the sailor have made the fortune of England. The manufacturer and the miner are under the City Man. They make the money, he decides what is to be done with it. He subsidised half Europe once, and paid British soldiers and sailors for fighting the other half.

He is the first to stretch out a hand to any afflicted people, and the hand is never an empty one. He cheats no one, and he always gives twenty shillings in the pound. In ornamental qualities any Continental trade-prince would outshine him, but in the respectability of code, the worthiness of lineage, commercial honour, domestic virtues, or length of purse, the City Man is more than a match for all comers.

He is the most described and the least known of all town types. Everyone who alludes to him in society papers or tawdry novels sneers at him. He is a big mark, and everyone flies an arrow at him. It is certain that all who sneer at him envy his riches. They would improve their own moral condition greatly by imitating his virtues. He is the most respectable character in the most respectable empire of the world.

## THE PROOF-READER.

THE Proof-Reader on a great daily journal is a very different being from the man associated with proofs in the ordinary offices where the average weekly paper is printed. On the dailies the chief Proof-Reader is generally a man of education, and often a broken-down gentleman.

He is the son of a house which has come to grief, or he has constructed his own grief for himself. Having received a good grounding in a grammar school, he has passed some time at a respectable college, or perhaps is a graduate of one of the universities. Anyway, he has a fair acquaintance with Latin, some faint reminiscences of Greek, and a decent smattering of French. Beside which, he is

well supplied with general information, and has a tenacious memory for names proper.

He also has a quick eye for form, and can detect a turned *s* or an *i* from a wrong fount ; can tell at one glance the *l* from the *I*, and perceive when a line is too close or too white, or when a patch of type looks spotty. He must be a supreme master of that art which has no fixed laws, and which is more at the mercy of the individual than any other—punctuation. It may safely be asserted that no two writing men out of a hundred would punctuate a column of a morning paper identically. The Proof-Reader on a good daily journal must be always able to punctuate so that the matter may read intelligibly, and when an author tries to insist on some unaccustomed form of pointing, the Reader must be ready to fall back on the rules of the office, real or imaginary, to repress eccentricity.

He must, of course, be perfect in spelling, or nearly so. He must never pass any word of which he has the shadow of a doubt without consulting the authority by which the office is ruled. His knowledge of grammar must be accurate, and he must have as quick

a scent for doubtful or ambiguous grammar as any schoolmaster.

Beyond grammar his domain reaches. He must have a moderate knowledge of style, chiefly with a view to perspicuity. He must never allow a sentence he does not understand to pass him without querying it.

He has even graver duties than these to discharge. It is his business, in case an incautious or headlong writer should pen some sentence or paragraph not in exact accord with the "line" of the paper on the subject, to draw attention to the questionable passage. Then, if there seems an approach to indelicacy or libel, he is supposed to see it, and mark it for the eyes of the editor, or whoever is getting out the paper.

Occasionally things very ugly for newspaper proprietors occur through the inattention of the Reader to his part of the business. For instance :

Some while ago a certain distinguished personage, let us say Richard I., came to an untimely end ; all Europe was writing about him, and certainly seven-eighths of the press of Europe observed at the very least an attitude

of decorous regret. One of the most clever and high-class of London papers intended to devote a large share of its space to recording the history of the event, and went to considerable expense to make the account worthy of the occasion. A writer who had been many years connected with the paper, and who was not known to be a sympathiser with Philip Augustus, happened to be entrusted with the writing of a large portion of the history of Richard.

The proprietor of the paper, as he believed, left everything in proper train at his office, and went home, having previously given orders that the earliest copy was to be sent to him.

No copy was ready until very late at night, and one did not reach him until early the next morning. He no sooner opened his copy than he shouted for a cab, bade the driver drive with all possible speed to the railway station, from which he started for town.

Arrived in town, he took another cab, and bade the man drive as quickly as he could to the office. Springing upstairs he asked :

“Have any copies gone out yet?”

"No."

It was a weekly paper.

"How many have been done?"

"Seventy thousand up to this."

"All the men at work since the machine started are still here?"

"Yes, sir."

"No man is to leave the office. Lock all the doors."

"Yes, sir."

"Someone has been robbing the till," said the "Deputy."

"Now," cried the proprietor, "call all the men and boys here."

In a short time they assembled.

"Has any man or boy sent out a copy of this issue?"

Yes, one copy had been given to someone who had called, but that was all.

"Mr. Deputy, take a cab, and do not come back here without that copy. And now, Mr. Foreman, men, and boys, not one of us leaves this office until the last sheet of the last copy of the seventy thousand has been burned. I will not trust one copy even to the paper-mill."

The fact was, the man who had written an important part of the notice had been a devout adherent of Philip Augustus for years, and the portion of the history contributed by him had been a violent onslaught on King Richard I., of whose side the paper had always been friendly, and over whose grave it would have been ruin to that paper to rejoice.

In the case above it was the business of the Reader, supposing him to have been at all acquainted with the traditions and feelings of the paper, to query this matter adverse to the dead king and the Plantagenet dynasty.

The average Reader of papers, not in the front rank, is rarely qualified to evoke enthusiasm. There are many reasons why we should not expect much from him. In the first place, he is often of little or no education. He has most likely been a compositor in his youth, and now that he has grown old, an easy berth, in which he may sit and doze away until the end, is desirable; he is therefore put into a little pen dignified by the name of the Reader's-closet.

He is round-shouldered, not particularly tidy in his person, is fifty-five years of age,

but looks at least ten years older. Gas and late hours, and the thick greasy atmosphere of the composing-room, have told upon him and made him prematurely old.

His faded grey eyes no longer retain any trace of fire, and intelligence has been for some time steadily on the wane. He is stolid and phlegmatic beyond conception. No matter what noise, excitement, or news enters or arises in the office, he never takes his eyes off the long narrow slip before him. Neither for client nor employer does he lift his head, unless he is addressed. Mechanically he grinds on with as little interest in what he is doing as a horse in a mill takes in the quality of the corn he grinds.

The cry of "Fire!" in the front, the shouts of "Murder!" in the back of the place he works in, does not attract his attention half so much as a turned comma or a battered capital letter. All the other men may run to the back or the front, he will not stir. There he stands, slowly following the printed lines on the long proof-slip, now and then asking the copy-holder a question, now and then making a hasty mark on the slip.

There is a story told of an attorney's copying-clerk, who was so subjugated to the mere art of copying and legal form, that his master bet a friend he would draw up a marriage settlement between Adam and Eve, keeping the items such as would suit the condition of our first parents, that the clerk would copy it out, and detect nothing unusual in it.

The settlement was drawn and handed to the clerk to engross. When the clerk was handing the clean draught back to his master, the latter said to him, "Did you notice anything peculiar in that settlement?"

"No," answered the clerk, "but that it seems very binding on the man's side."

One might go farther than this with the ordinary Proof-Reader, and say that he would read the proof of an indictment for murder against himself with as little emotion as he would a proof of the multiplication-table.

Day after day he reads, and reads, and reads, seldom more than a quarter of an hour at a time the same matter. Now it is the title-page for a prayer-book, then the advertisement of a hatter, then half a

chapter of a story about pirates for boys, then a review of a new translation of Plautus, then a portion of the prayer-book, then a galley of "spicy" paragraphs, then a handbill about a new grocer's shop, then an analytical examination of the London water, then the list of goods kept by a co-operative store, then the advertisement of a new pill, followed by the array of diseases it is able and anxious to cure.

During all his labours he has for familiar a boy of melancholy voice and weak and gentle manners who "holds the copy," that is, reads out in a dead level monotone the manuscript of which the printed slip is before the Reader.

From this manuscript the crushed boy never lifts his eye. Whether it is "comic copy" or the account of an exciting fight between pirates and Midshipman Jack's command, that boy's tone never varies. On straight he goes, getting no more excited over the appetising list of sweetmeats kept in the co-operative store than over the host of diseases which the pill is able and anxious to slay.

This man and boy never weep, never laugh, never smile, at any matter coming before them in the routine of their profession. Like police magistrates, they are wholly unmoved by anything they hear while on duty; but, unlike police magistrates, they have no audiences, and would gain nothing by affecting the virtue of sympathy when they have it not.

## THE PARLIAMENT OF MAN.

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-flags  
were furl'd

In the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World.

WE have spent a few minutes in a vain search for a copy of De Quincey's "Opium Eater." We think we may rely on our memory of the Confessions, to say the writer tells us his imagination was at one time fascinated by a certain epoch of Roman history, and that his favourite historian was Livy. Our favourite historian is Whitaker. We will not pause to contrast the style of Titus Livius with that of Joseph Whitaker; for in such a comparison our favourite might be worsted, and we confess we are a partisan. But when we come to compare the statements of the two historians with the facts of history, we stand by our man. When remote posterity possesses no more of the

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literature of this age than we do of the literature of old Egypt, when the only clue to the tongue we speak to-day is this book we are bringing to a close, handed down intact by grateful and discriminating generations, and when upon the last throb of the war-drum they raise Cleopatra's Needle to use it as the foundation-stone for the temple of peace, and find beneath it the copy of "Whitaker's Almanack" deposited as its base, a flood of light will rush in upon the fabulous past, our day, such as never illumed this world since it first owned allegiance to the sun.

To-day London is the Parliament of Man. It legislates for the vastest, the richest, and the mightiest empire ever raised on earth. To this Parliament all the minor nations have not yet been officially admitted. Such immature colonies as Russia and Brazil, and Persia and Spain, have yet to be allowed a vote in this Parliament. Those outlying colonies have, up to this, not learned our language. True, there are only eighty millions of people who speak English, but eighty millions make a fine band of schoolmasters and visiting tutors, and we have already sent

out twelve or fourteen millions of monitors whose duty it is to teach the tongue in remote colonies and barbarous lands. In this huge Parliament of London we have already opened the doors to thirty-three millions and a half of our own islanders, two hundred and forty-one millions of Hindoos, three million two hundred thousand of other Asiatics, two millions and a half of Australasians, three million six hundred thousand of North Americans, one hundred thousand Guineans, one million and a half of Africans, one million one hundred and forty thousand West Indians, one hundred and sixty thousand extern Europeans, and two hundred thousand unspecified ; making in all two hundred and eighty-seven millions four hundred thousand souls. Who wants Livy's lies about the Roman Empire when these are Whitaker's facts about our own ! Not we, quaint Whitaker ! Next year you will tell the world how many Afghans and Zulus have been added to the score. With inspired prudence you have placed after "The British Empire in India," "Countries adjacent to British India ;" under the latter heading I find

Afghanistan, Beloochistan, Persia, Turkish Arabia, and Burmah. Inspired Whitaker! Already we are opening the door for Burmah. For the others we have not room yet, but every day we are building wings to our great house where the Parliament of Man sits.


The area of this Empire is roundly nine million square miles, the revenue one hundred and sixty millions, the public debt nine hundred and sixty-six millions, imports and exports nine hundred and forty-six millions. What colossal totals, necromantic Whitaker! What need have we of magic wand or black art, since from you we can draw material for stupendous visions? You are the Ariel to our Prospero, quaint historian; but you never complain. You marshal before our eyes the most puissant horde of man ever gathered under one banner. You pile up before us pyramid on pyramid of gold, enough to buy all the other nations of the earth. You roll before us the limitless scroll, showing realms of all climes, and all this, you say, is ours! And down there, under me as I write, in that dingy house by the water, the men who govern this enormous host, who dispense these dazzling piles of treasure, who till one-

fifth of the "Devil's snug little farm, the earth," are eating chops and making jokes, and taking the world easy, like ourselves. Who can stand by night on Westminster Bridge, look down on the dark silent Thames and fancy a panorama of the world seen by the light burning on the Clock Tower, without a feeling of profoundest awe?

Now, while that bright light shines from that tower, the eyes of millions upon millions of men are fixed on that gloomy pile, watching how the struggle ebbs and flows. The ears of myriads of men are thrust forward towards that house to catch the far-off whispers of their fate. In the puerile days of earth armies were summoned by horsemen, and order was kept by the sword. To-day opinions are marshalled by telegraph, and order is kept by the vote.

To-morrow, when the war-drum throbs no longer, and the battle-flag is furled in the Parliament of Man, London will be the capital of the federation of the world. Each year London adds to itself forty miles of streets, fourteen thousand houses, two hundred and fifty streets, a hundred thousand people. This increment must go on, and must take the form of a geometrical rather than an arithmetical progression. Three hundred years

hence, when London has a population of between forty and fifty millions, when English has become the universal language, when every hill now barren, every tract now a desert of rolling sand, and every acre of the globe have been taught their duty of yielding food for man; when the development of man has reached another stage, and Roman law is abolished, and it has become possible and pleasant and profitable to live according to Christian rule; when the full compass of Nature has been filled out so that all her resources have been discovered and utilised, when the increase of population stops of its own accord, because the fountains of sustentation for man will yield no meat for one more human mouth; when, in fine, science has torn the core out of Nature, and all things are known and are possible;—then, as now, London will be the Empress of Cities, the most amazing spot of ground on God's earth.



THE END.

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CHARLES DICKENS AND EVANS, CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS





